

Constitution Mar 25

Mass-Built Housing By Industry Planned

By WARREN WEAVER JR.
(Copyright 1969 by The New York Times)

WASHINGTON — The Nixon administration is at work on a new housing program that will attempt to spur competition between giant corporations for the right to build hundreds of thousands of low-cost units all over the country.

The secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George W.

6 Die in Crash Of RAF Plane

FAIRFORD, England (UPI). A Royal Air Force transport plane crashed and burned Monday during a training exercise, and a spokesman for the British Defense Ministry said all six men aboard were killed.

The plane was a four-engine U.S.-built C130 Hercules that had been sold to the RAF.

The Defense Ministry spokesmen said the plane crashed about 200 yards short of the runway at the RAF's Fairford Base.

Romney, told reporters Monday that the key to the new experiment would be the encouragement of mass production techniques in an industry where both the laws and the customs have tended to produce buildings one at a time in the past.

By pooling the separate housing needs of the major states and cities into a single mass market, Romney indicated the nation could make profitable use of the assembly line system, originated in his former industry, automobiles, in his former city, Detroit.

Romney estimated that the plan could produce from 250,000 to 350,000 low-cost housing units a year, but he said that the first of them would probably not become available for about three years.

"You don't design an automobile in a few months, it takes a couple of years," the former president of American Motors said.

The housing secretary has talked informally with governors of a number of large states and

some leaders of the construction trades unions. He said he was encouraged by their favorable reaction.

Romney said that the proposal would not involve any federal spending beyond that already planned for the mortgage interest subsidy program voted by Congress last year. Enough money should be available even if the Vietnam war continues, he added.

He said his plan called first for federal authorities to take a kind of informal inventory of housing needs, in each major state and city.

"If we bring together sufficient volume of demand," Romney said, "then we can go to the national corporations and say: 'What can you produce for this market?'"

The corporations would be invited to submit cost figures competitively, as though they were bidding on an actual construction contract. State and city housing authorities could then contract with the lowest bidder for construction of their share of the national inventory.