

October 11, 1940

[Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania]

FDR Speech File

1313

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION  
OF THE 100,000TH HOUSING UNIT, IN  
TERRACE VILLAGE, PITTSBURGH, PA.,  
OCTOBER 11th, 1940.

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MR. MAYOR, MR. EVANS, MY GOOD FRIENDS OF PITTSBURGH:

I have come here today very informally on what is essentially a trip to educate myself, to learn about what is happening for national defense in this section, and at the same time to look over some of these projects that have, as the Mayor said, a great deal to do with national defense.

I go back over more than a quarter of a century to the first study in this country of any importance that was made in relation to the problem of better housing. It was done here in Pittsburgh over a quarter of a century ago and it seems to me that from that time on we have been learning steadily, all over the Nation, more about the need of better housing for our citizens. It has taken initiative and at last we are getting examples like this.

In this particular project of the U. S. Housing Authority there is contained the one hundred thousandth family dwelling unit -- all of them built through that one agency. Say there are five people to the family. Well, that would account for five hundred thousand Americans. That is not very much out of one hundred and thirty million and therefore we know that this work has only started and that it has got to go on.

Still, half a million people represent a pretty sizeable crowd and we must remember that in other methods, other forms of building houses in this country we have added -- in addition to those five hundred thousand people we have taken care of nearly two million more people who have been given better homes.

All that represents another phase of Democracy at work and we have here a representation of intelligent and sympathetic cooperation between the Federal Government and the local agencies of government. The Federal Government, through the Congress, provided, initially, funds with which these buildings were built. The homes were conceived and constructed under the direction of the Housing Authority of Pittsburgh.

And may I say that these homes are a monument to the devotion and the perseverance of the leaders in this housing movement in Pittsburgh. Not only this section but every other section of the Union is richer for having antiquated, squalid shacks replaced by these bright, decent houses. You know, everything wears out in time, or it gets obsolete, and it is a mighty difficult thing for us to ask our population to live in obsolete or worn-out houses that were built 75 or 100 years ago.

The jobs and the homes of most of the people in our country constitute a part of their stake in the Nation. As long as they know that their government is sympathetically working to protect their jobs and to better their homes, we can be confident that if the need arises the people themselves will wholeheartedly join in the defense of their homes and the defense of their democracy.

And so I regard these housing projects everywhere as a part of the program of defense. You are doing a grand job. Do more of it and speed it up.

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This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

STATEMENTS FILE

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Informal remarks of the President ~~on~~  
On the occasion of the dedication  
of the 100,000th housing unit,  
in Terrace Village, Pittsburgh, Pa.,  
October 11th, 1940.

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