

I was in the Department of Defense on a number of problems of joint concern.

Therefore, because of that acquaintancy, and because of the fact that in my previous professional life I have been close to the Bureau of Standards scientific and engineering community, I did know of their general areas of interest and of their general competence.

Within the past 6 months we have begun to develop a fairly broad strategy throughout the Department for beginning to attack the problem of producing much larger quantities of low-cost housing for our lower income families. For various reasons, it appeared important to us that we examine the question of performance specifications.

Now, this is a fairly well-known way of designing, developing, and procuring materials in Defense and other areas. It is not a common way of specifying housing needs. That is to say, we would like to be able to specify what we wish in a low-cost house, not in terms of the components and the materials alone, but rather in the performance of the building that you would expect in terms of its safety, its sanitary characteristics, and so on.

Since the Department of Commerce's National Bureau of Standards has a very competent group in the building area, I spoke informally to John Eberhard who is the head of the group containing that activity and we gradually came to the conclusion that, in fact, the Bureau could and would be willing to study the matter of performance specifications. Later, we formally transferred some funds to them to work against a specified work statement and a schedule, and they are engaged in that activity now.

The hope here—more than that, I would say in my view, the trust here—is that when we learn how to describe our low-cost housing needs in terms of performance, and we further learn how to test for this performance, this will allow and encourage innovation in the housing field of a sort that would profit industry, the Government, and our lower income families.

Mr. ROUSH. Thank you.

Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN. This Institute of Urban Development that you mentioned, is this a facility or an organization which you contemplate would be doing broad research on the total problems of urban development?

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Brown, if I may, and I believe you will appreciate this, I would exhibit just a bit of hesitancy in responding in detail to your question, since the precise form and character of the Institute is being developed under the President's direction at the moment.

But I do think it fair to observe that, at least for the moment, I would not expect it to need laboratory facilities beyond, say, computational facilities. I don't expect—again, for the moment—that it would be engaged in technological activities. Rather, I would imagine that it would bring together people of various scholastic attainments and experiences in the broad urban field to begin to make a consistent, detailed, and a comprehensive study of the urban scene, focusing attention on our deep urban problems and, hopefully, coming to conclusions that would be of value to those in the government—and not the Federal Government alone, I might add—those in the government who have policy responsibilities.