

FALLOUT SHELTER IS RAT-INFESTED

4 Chosen Tenements Found Unsanitary, With Leaky Pipes, Piled-Up Refuse

By **ALEXANDER BURNHAM**

The Defense Department has designated four Harlem tenements with a long history of health and building code violations as fallout shelters.

Among the violations are rat infestation, leakage of sewage into the cellars and accumulations of open garbage. In one structure, the city's Buildings Department says, there are 124 violations pending against the landlord.

The designated buildings, bearing the yellow and black Department of Defense fallout signs, are the 5-story walkups at 5, 7, 9 and 11 East 131st Street.

An inspection of the cellars of the four buildings yesterday disclosed that water flowed steadily from broken plumbing, flies swarmed around open garbage cans, and coal ashes and other debris blocked doors and passageways.

Residents Scornful

"Isn't it pathetic?" asked one woman resident. "Who'd want to go down there? If fallout came, I'd just run."

Another woman added: "The rats are as big as dogs and run through the house like horses."

A spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers, asked for comment on the conditions, said that it should be borne in mind that "these shelters are for protection against fallout." "The main thing here is survival," he said. "If people are living in them now, they can survive the 10 days to two weeks" of a fallout attack. He added that many buildings of this type could be found throughout the city.

Another spokesman, speaking for the city's Civil Defense organization, said the buildings were chosen for their "protective value" and that sanitary violations were not considered.

In selecting fallout shelters, the Corps of Engineers relies on recommendations of a number of New York City architectural and engineering concerns, based on surveys of city structures.

Many to Be Chosen

Thus far, 18,000 buildings have been so designated, with 34,000 still needing Defense Department approval.

In picking shelters, the engineering concerns employ a guide of "procedures and standards" formulated by the Office of Civil Defense. For example, the guide suggests that "trash and garbage should not be allowed to accumulate" in buildings. The structures inspected yesterday did not appear to follow this advice.

The guide also requires that "the basic requirements for a shelter ventilation system is that it provide a safe and tolerable environment for a specified shelter occupancy time." Neither the cellars nor the hallways of the tenements inspected yesterday seemed to fit this requirement. An overwhelming odor of urine filled one of the tenements.