

MOSCOW CONGESTED; RENTS EXORBITANT

**Houses Offer Few Conveniences,
but There Is a Great Rush for
Any Available.**

MOSCOW, Nov. 2 (Associated Press).—All of the compactness of living like sardines in a can, together with about the same amount of privacy as if one were living in a goldfish bowl, is enjoyed by the majority of Moscow's inhabitants. There are more than 2,000,000 of them, living in a city built for less than a million, and only the very prosperous newly-rich and a few lucky foreigners who have fat expense accounts have anything like spacious quarters.

Housing conditions are somewhat better than last year, because some buildings have been repaired, but for every free room there are hundreds of applicants, ready to pay large fees merely for the privilege of moving in.

Generally speaking, the legal amount of space to which any individual is entitled equals that taken up in an American house by a small bathroom or a large clothes closet. In houses which have been returned to private owners, or which have been exempted from the space regulations by agreement with individuals who undertake to repair them, it is sometimes possible to obtain several rooms. But Moscow is money-mad, and has been for two years, and the premiums charged merely for obtaining rooms are sometimes fantastic. For example, the writer was asked \$500 cash, plus \$75 rental, for one small unfurnished room with no convenience whatsoever.

Foreigners usually live in the Government controlled hotels, which of late have become so expensive that London or New York hotel charges pale in comparison.

All of the Moscow hotels and restaurants are now on a gold basis, calculating the charges in gold rubles and converting them into paper money at the day's rate of exchange.

Rooms outside of the hotels are so rarely discovered that when word of one being free reaches Moscow's horde of commission brokers, the location is carefully guarded until after some mysterious negotiations the brokers feel certain that the room seeker is not also a commissioner seeking a profit.