

Representative WIDNALL. What bothered me a little bit, in thinking about this whole, overall picture is whether or not, because you have got X number of people, you have got to feel you have got to put X number of people into employment.

Now, I am sure there are plenty of families where they do not require employment, they do not have to have employment, and, yet, you think about the overall picture as though, because there are so many people, so many should be employed, whether this is a right perspective, the right picture that we should be looking at.

Mr. CLAGUE. Mr. Congressman, this is one of the things that we have had the most difficulty in making clear to the public.

Our unemployment figures are not necessarily an indication of need for employment.

Many unemployed persons do not need a job in the sense that they are going to starve if they do not get it. Unemployment is an economic statistic. It shows the number of persons, according to their own interpretation, who are either in the labor force, working or indicating the intention of doing so.

There is obviously an indirect connection with need. If a person is out of work for a considerable period of time, he is more than likely going to have need for a job more urgently. But our figures on unemployment represents what we like to have called an economic statistic.

It is available labor supply offering itself on the market, and it ought to be interpreted in that light.

I would like to say one more word there. It is certainly true that many of these persons are on the fringes here—I use that word in no derogatory sense—are on the fringes of the labor market. They go in and out, depending on whether there is a job there that would really appeal to them and that they would like to do.

Their being out of the labor force does not mean at all that they need a job or even want a job or are interested in it.

And, yet, with a new opportunity opening up, they might jump in very quickly.

Representative WIDNALL. Mr. Clague, earlier you mentioned a number of reasons why you felt people were not going into the labor market, picking up jobs that were available. Now, I find one in particular: continuity of a job. There is a reluctance on the part of a lot of people who have been employed steadily to take any part-time job that is going to last only 2 or 3 days, and this is in many categories of employment.

Now, I can understand their desire to have steady employment, but, at the same time, there are a lot of part-time jobs available that pay well.

Mr. CLAGUE. Yes.

Representative WIDNALL. And the people do not want to take them because there is no continuity to the job, although it would appear that they could piece together some of those part-time jobs and have full-time employment.

If we could in some way piece these jobs together to provide the employment steadily for people, I think it would be a healthy thing.

Mr. CLAGUE. Well, yes, Mr. Congressman.