

occasion, involving the highest interests of the people of the city of New York. I am here to speak for them. Of course, as a citizen, I am concerned for the rest of the country, too. I think this legislation is necessary for the national interest and for the welfare of every part of this country. There is no large city in this country of which I am aware, which does not know the problem of poverty.

I want especially to emphasize that I consider this legislation to be very much in the national interest, for the Nation as a whole. While this legislation deals directly with those fellow Americans who are handicapped by poverty, the rest of us would also benefit. All of us would share very substantially in the advantages that would flow from even the partial removal of the blight of poverty from among our people or any part of them.

We all pay a part of the cost assessed by poverty. Financially, it is an expense we all pay a part of. We pay it in the various forms of taxes for the several kinds of public welfare programs. This coming year the city's new budget provides over \$464 million for the various activities of our welfare department. This is a \$70 million increase over last year. The large bulk of this money is for children under 18 while the next largest category of persons receiving assistance from the city are disabled adults, followed by adults over 65. We pay for poverty in the cost of the upkeep of the slums; yes, we do pay for the upkeep of slums in lower returns on our real estate taxes. We pay for poverty in the loss of the taxes that poor people would pay if they were receiving average incomes instead of substandard ones, and in the loss of the purchasing power that these people would have; in terms of their decreased contribution to the gross national product; in the cost of hospitalizing them when they are sick, and supporting them when they are very young, and when they are very old, and when they get into trouble with the law. And these are just some of the financial costs of poverty. There are others. I have recited these to indicate what poverty costs you and me, the citizens and taxpayers, and the business firms of New York City, of Portland, Oreg., of Trenton, N.J., of South Bend, Ind., and of the countryside, too.

Just as poverty is nationwide and distributed equally between the city and the country, so is the social cost of poverty, and among all the elements in the population.

Certainly the interests of New York City are, indeed, deeply involved in the legislation before you. It is impossible for me to over-emphasize the importance which we attach to it—not just to the legislation itself but even more to the program for which it stands, and the problem which it undertakes to attack. I refer to it as a problem. Actually, it is many problems. It is a complex of problems. It is a crossroad of problems, a network of problems.

A considered and concerted attack on poverty—on its roots as well as on its manifestations—should be regarded as an unavoidable undertaking. It isn't a question of whether we should. It is a question of how, how much, and how soon.

This legislation proposes nothing radical or radically new.

This Nation has long recognized its obligation to do something about the poor, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged, and the unfortunate.