

Many of the titles in the Social Security Act are devoted to this purpose. The Public Housing Law of 1937 was directed entirely to that essential objective. So are many other laws on the statute books of this Nation and many other programs authorized and appropriated for by this Congress. The basic theme of these laws is to help people help themselves and to assist and encourage the localities to help people—to help bring people out of the morass of helplessness and into the main road of the social and economic life of their communities and of the Nation.

In other words, the legislation before you proposes to attack, in a more fundamental way, the same problem that the Congress has been attacking for a generation and on which Congress has spent billions of dollars.

Let me say at this point that the people of New York City have paid more than their proportionate share of the total amount of what the Federal Government has spent for this purpose. I am not saying this as a complaint but I do want to make this point in connection with the appeal that we are making here today for prompt consideration and action on the pending legislation which would contribute, in a significant way, to the attack upon a nationwide problem of which we in New York City have our proportionate share. It is interesting that we in New York City have about the same percentage of poverty in our population as in the rest of the country. It is surprising how precisely this works out. I will refer to these statistics in a moment. But first I want to stress that we do need Federal leadership. We need Federal funds. We need the incentive and the definition of the problem and the kind of cooperation and mobilization of all resources, public and private, that will be facilitated by the passage of this law.

The fact is that the Federal Government, the State governments, and most local governments have been spending a good share of their resources on poverty for quite a few years now. Back in 1927, New York City spent a total of \$12,000 on public welfare and on poverty. Today we are spending almost a third of our entire \$3½ billion budget on poverty and its effects.

Recently, we made a list of New York City's governmental expenditures designed principally to sustain and reduce poverty and indigency. We did this simply by scanning our budget. The total amount was \$781 million for the current fiscal year. And I would guess that another \$200 million is actually being spent for the same general purpose, which cannot be located in the budget by merely scanning it. I am thinking of some of the community activities in which our police department engages, such as its special youth services. And the same would be true of other major departments.

Now let me recall, if I may, that I saw the importance—indeed the urgency—of a war on poverty quite sometime before President Johnson proclaimed this war.

In August of 1962—and that is almost 2 years ago—I addressed the New York City Council and said:

New York City's poor and their poverty is the root of many of New York City's problems. The socioeconomic problems related to both unemployment and poverty present us with inescapable challenges to action. It will require the maximum ingenuity, energy and resources of all branches of our city government to achieve the solutions that must be found. To accomplish this, we need many