

speaking not only for my own city hall and community but for the chief executives of other major cities where the sores of poverty fester most distressingly—I appreciate this opportunity to join other witnesses before this subcommittee in applauding purposes of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and underscoring pressing needs for its program.

The conference of mayors was one of the first recruits in President Johnson's "unconditional war on poverty in America" for which the proposed bill is the plan of battle.

In a policy memorandum addressed to the President in January, the conference's executive committee pledged frontline services of mayors in this national crusade against the enemy which has made such damaging inroads into our society and economy.

"The major battlefields in the war against poverty lie in the cities and towns all across America," the memorandum to the President pointed out. We noted that 18 million persons in the forgotten fifth of our population live in urban slums and blighted areas. Often trapped by conditions from which they can find no escape, they are virtual foreigners in an affluent society which now holds little promise for many of them beyond the poorhouse-like confines of relief rolls.

In our time we are not going to eliminate the scourge of poverty. No doubt it always will be with us and with generations to come.

But it is irresponsible defeatism to accept this as a fact of life and cynically let it go at that—or to brush it aside as something that can be faced locally on a neighborhood charity basis. The poor are a national problem and a national shame. They need and deserve national attention.

All of us in government—at all levels—are obligated by the public trusts we hold to do more than bemoan the situations in which so many of our citizens find themselves. The subcommittee is well supplied with official statistics on how many poor there are. I cite one item in one working paper—"The War on Poverty," submitted as a congressional presentation at the outset of these hearings: There are "nearly 10 million families who try to find shelter, feed and clothe their children, stave off disease and malnutrition, and somehow build a better life on less than \$60 a week."

If we are to accept and not evade the challenge of poverty, we must devise and perfect more effective weapons to try to check the enemy's advances, stop the infiltrations which have penetrated so deeply, and rescue victims of poverty whose lives can be salvaged and restored for the good of the whole community as well as of themselves.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 provides an arsenal needed for a mass mobilization of our forces—Federal, State, and local—to get the counterattacks underway.

A general national offensive against poverty is long overdue.

The weapons blueprinted for it in the administration's bill—the Job Corps, work-training and work-study programs, urban and rural community action programs, employment and investment incentives, Volunteers for America—aren't revolutionary or even visionary. There are imaginative concepts, but they aren't all new. Some of the devices—such as the Job Corps—are adaptations of methods which already have been tested, in however limited ways, and found effective.

In fact, the Economic Opportunity Act can be regarded fairly as