

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The community services programs of the mayor's commission are designed to develop the competence of our low-income population through self-help and self-improvement programs.

We are under no illusions that we know all the answers to such a complex problem as poverty. But, as a result of our investigations we have considerable insight into the problem. We know, that poverty has many roots: Inadequate education, lack of appropriate skills for a fast-changing economy, erratic employment patterns, inadequate work habits and ill health.

We know that much more research is needed before we can successfully determine the causes of poverty and how to combat it; the causes are many, diverse, and complex. Such research would be of inestimable value to Syracuse and other communities with similar characteristics. It is only through research and creative experimentation and demonstration that we may finally develop a workable solution.

SPECIFIC COMMENT ON THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1964

I approach my specific comment on the proposed legislation from the single viewpoint of being mayor of the city of Syracuse, a middle-size urban area functioning as the heart of a middle-size metropolitan area. Our problems are not the problems of the relatively few great metropolises of the Nation, nor are they the problems of the rural areas, but, they are problems, I believe, common to many of the 81 cities across the Nation, with populations ranging from 100,000 to 250,000, and many of the 48 metropolitan areas with populations ranging from 250,000 to 500,000.

My lack of comment on certain titles and sections of the proposed legislation does not mean that I categorically support or oppose these sections; it means, only, that these sections are not, in our community's mind, necessarily critical to the Syracuse situation.

I would recommend revision of the Job Corps proposal under Title I—Youth Programs, section 102. The concept of recruiting 100,000 young men between the ages of 16 and 22 and placing them in more than 100 camps across the country for 2 years of work and training may not be the best expenditure of public funds: It removes the young man from direct family and community associations. It may be injurious to his sense of self-reliance and responsibility, substituting the authority and direction of the Job Corps for his own will and resourcefulness. It is one further breach in family solidarity. And most important, it violates the principle of local control.

We strongly believe that Federal grants for poverty programs should be made direct to the community. There are two outstanding reasons:

1. The programs do not become fragmented. They are part of an integrated program directed at the problems of the community and directed by that community.
2. The programs can be so designed as to meet the specific demands of local labor markets.