

versity. If further identification is required, I will be glad to go into that, but I would not want to bore you with details, so I will get on, if you please, sir.

The purpose of my appearance before you is to talk not about poverty but economic opportunity and the immediate need for an organization to provide it.

For opportunity, as I am sure you all appreciate, is the very breath of a free society. When opportunity threatens to be displaced by dark pockets of despair, a society is forewarned that it is past the summit of achievement and is headed down the steep slopes of decline. The United States passed through one nightmarish period when opportunity seemed beyond recapture for many million worthy Americans. It must never drift into another for failure to act decisively and in time.

Over 30 years ago, the entire Nation shivered under the impact of a major economic disaster. We have learned much since those oppressive days, but not enough. Happily, we have learned to stop arguing about who caused the great depression and to agree that the business community and government together must develop and maintain a cohesive unity of purpose that will put even the threat of a major economic collapse forever behind us. This state of mind I sincerely believe is bipartisan or unpartisan and is shared generally by the vast majority of our thinking citizens. This, I am sure you will agree, is as it should be. I hope and pray for some new maturity in our thinking. But I think the Nation has reached a new stage in her existence when we need to push this nonpartisan approach another firm step forward.

The concept of government and the business community as disaster crews is hopelessly obsolete. Neither government nor the business community ought to be viewed as a Red Cross task force speeding to the scene of each successive disaster area; rather, they should be partners joined in the prevention of disaster.

Our national economy, as we well know, suffers from several nagging conditions of unsettlement that disturbs us all. It is a familiar cataloging: depressed areas, people thrown out of work because of automation who require new training; dropouts from our schools who lack skills for proper placement; older people who have been outflanked by technological change and need the opportunity to retool; small business that can soon become source of employment if given the chance to move ahead; and many others.

Now, the mastery of all these problems is, as I have said, a bipartisan, not a partisan, concern. I believe and repeat that the business community is ready and willing to view it as such.

The bill before you for consideration, which I know I should not have to go into details on—you are as familiar with it or more familiar with it than I am—but the bill before you outlines a reasonable beginning, a project that brings into appropriate posture, in my humble opinion, these problems that beset us. It is a beginning step, an orderly attempt and, in my judgment, one that certainly warrants trial, but let me be frank: it can only succeed if the full resources of labor, business, and the agencies of Federal, State, and local government march side by side in support of it.