

The advancement of economic opportunity is not going to be brought about by a massive transfusion of Federal funds. Nor can it be superimposed from the top through directors with some supreme authority designed to work miracles all over the trouble spots of this Republic. Opportunity, if it is not to become a snare and a delusion, must be generated by the time-tested traditional forces that have sustained this Nation from its inception: a strong belief in the individual and his mobility within our society. On this matter, there can be no doubt. We have an abundance of managerial talents and resources to make America a fortress of freedom. We have within our grasp the opportunity to banish blight and the brooding patches of despair that darken the lives of perhaps one-fifth of our fellow Americans. But we must act and act with resolute will. Why? Because it is morally right. It is our national destiny and there can be no compromise.

Ours is a robust, muscular economy. It is a society that is incorrigibly optimistic. We must keep it that way. Yet, we know that today America rides the eye of the hurricane in world affairs. The people of the world watch our every action, how we comport ourselves, how we handle our many diverse problems here at home. Today the world knows and applauds the fact that 35 percent of those over 18 in America go to college, twice that of any other nation. Yet, it must wonder, it must ponder, why a nation that performs such spectacular feats in bringing that opportunity to one segment of its population cannot organize and coordinate its efforts to open a new door of hope to millions of its citizens whose only hope, I am afraid, is a shore dimly seen. It has often been remarked by European service that in America everyone has a second chance and many times a third chance. This was once true. But increasingly, I am afraid this is no longer true for vast numbers of our people. We dare not tarry, pause, or postpone a concerted effort to restore opportunity for all.

In summation, I underscore a few points: Economic opportunity has receded badly for large groups of our citizens for reasons quite beyond their control. These conditions are becoming increasingly aggravated. No systematic attack with continuity has yet been devised to get on top of the situation.

Social unrest and unsettlement is steadily becoming more explosive in our great urban centers. The crime rate is rising and I am afraid will continue to do so unless we address ourselves consistently to the underlying causes.

Moreover, it is not only our cities where contracting economic opportunity has reached disquieting proportions, in many parts of the Nation small farmers cannot make ends meet. They should be given assistance, and assistance, in my humble opinion, again, as outlined in this bill.

Another unsettling problem of the rural area is the death of the small town. All over America small towns are deteriorating into ghost towns and their dwindling inhabitants are becoming almost faceless characters whose future is behind them. Happily we still work in the light. We can do something. But the world is watching and wondering if this bountifully blessed Nation has no longer the resources, the will, and the spirit to meet the supreme test to help all its people have an equal place at the starting line.