

Opportunity has been the watchword of American progress for 175 years. It was the spirit that animated the system that the Founding Fathers bequeathed to us. Economic opportunity for all, if we are to reach dry, firm ground, will come only if we combine the powerful resources we have, private and public, National, State, and local, for one mighty coordinated effort.

So I say to you, our trustees, that the Office of Economic Opportunity, as proposed by President Johnson, should be established without delay.

Two points occurred to me as I was talking with some of my other trustees. Some reference has been made about Federal agencies getting into business, and so forth. Two points occurred to me which I think might be analogous. I am sure, and particularly sure that some of the other Congressmen with whom I discussed this will recall the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Perhaps many present here were either the direct or indirect beneficiaries of its assistance—this temporary Federal agency in the national emergency to which I referred.

I am sure you also recall, as I do, as an Administrator of the National Production Authority, that during the Korean emergency it was essential to enact the Defense Production Act of 1950, pursuant to which the President could and did create an Office of Defense Mobilization to direct and coordinate the many facets of Government presumably responsible for the defense of our Nation in order to bring the full forces of our resources into solid unit under the direction of the most competent personnel it could enlist to attack the problem.

Thank you very much.

Mr. PUCINSKI. Mr. Martin is from Chicago. We are pleased to have him here.

Mr. Martin is one of our most outstanding civic leaders. I think the committee is indeed privileged to have his views this morning on this very important subject. I just want to tell Mr. Martin that Mr. Bell and I have another committee meeting. If I have to leave anywhere during the testimony, it is because of a conflict.

Mr. V. MARTIN. I understand.

Mr. BELL. I understand that none of the gentlemen has submitted statements. Is that right?

Mr. LANDRUM. Mr. Besse had a formal statement from which he read. Mr. Nichols spoke extemporaneously. Mr. Martin will likewise speak extemporaneously.

You may proceed, Mr. Martin.

STATEMENT OF VIRGIL MARTIN, PRESIDENT, CARSON-PIRIE-SCOTT CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

Mr. V. MARTIN. Thank you very much.

My name is Virgil Martin, president of Carson-Pirie-Scott Co., in Chicago. We are essentially a retail and wholesale distribution company with approximately 8,500 employees situated in 4 Midwestern States, but headquartered in Chicago. About 3 years ago, I was the chairman of the Illinois Public Aid Commission, which was then a commission rather than a code department to which it has been changed now and, as such, was the nonpaid chairman of a citizens group which was in charge of the welfare activities within our State.