slowly in the next few years of a lackluster economy. This effectively rebutted the contention that modern poverty is unrelated to the economy's total health. Last spring, when Walter W. Heller, the President's Chief Economic Adviser, first determined to spur an attack on poverty, he turned to Lampman—then on Heller's staff—for a broad design.

To gage the progress of the campaign, Lampman has devised the concept of the withdrawal rate. This is a measure of the number who each year climb above a set level defined as the poverty line. The idea of a withdrawal rate is likely to become a fixture in the Government's planning. Given the current definition of poverty as a family income under $3,000, Lampman concludes that a withdrawal rate of a million a year is within reach of the programs that a Johnson administration is likely to adopt. This rate assumes a high level of employment and some acceleration of economic growth. Since more than 30 million Americans are now below the poverty line, an annual withdrawal rate of 1 million implies at least a 30-year program.

This may look like a modest pace, but it is well above the rate sustained even during the buoyant decade after the Second World War. Between 1947 and 1957 Lampman estimates, about 800,000 a year rose from the poverty level. In the next 5 years the rate fell to about 500,000. This decline was the result of sluggish growth, high unemployment, and a slower gain in the payments made directly to the poor from social security and other channels of transferring income. The economy's recent torpor, then, has left the Nation with a deficit of 1.5 million who might otherwise have escaped from poverty. Against this background, Lampman's suggested yearly target of a million withdrawals appears more ambitious; it is in fact approximately double the recent rate.

In a recent conversation with me, Lampman discussed other proposals to transfer income. If social security payments were doubled, 5 million aged persons could be removed at once from the poverty rolls at a yearly cost of $6 billion. Lampman pointed out that in other countries, Canada and Great Britain, for example, for years Government allowances have been paid to families with children. These payments have helped rescue some deserted, divorced and widowed mothers and their children from poverty. Indeed, nothing short of such direct payments is likely to do much for the impoverished aged, the fully disabled, and the poverty-stricken female heads of families. If Johnson is elected in November, his next administration probably will press for higher social security benefits and perhaps other welfare payments. But under the constraints of the current budget, direct payments of any significant size are simply not on this administration's agenda. A more limited program directed largely to rescuing some of those who can make a productive contribution is the most that the Government economists envision now.

The long-range arithmetic of the economists follows these lines: $3 to $4 billion a year is now spent—or, perhaps more accurately, misspent—on scattered programs affecting the poor. The new programs which will add less than $1 billion to the total effort in fiscal 1965, will be augmented by $2 to $3 billion annually in the next few years. At the peak, the Federal Government will spend more than $6 billion a year on the poor. In perhaps 10 years, these officials suggest, the Federal share of the costs might decline and State and local governments could be expected to pick up more of the burden.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The administration's strategy for its drive against poverty draws on a wide variety of sources; indeed, nobody can assert with authority what will and won't work. Even so, a set of common assumptions and conclusions underlies the whole project. Here are four essential points that guided the administration:

Because of the current budget restraints and the commitment to hold down public spending, at present the Government can employ only limited resources for the huge problem it has chosen to deal with. A memorandum that circulated among the Cabinet in early November made this point explicit.

There are already a host of ill-defined programs to help the poor at the Federal, State, and local levels. They are scattered uncoordinated, and often duplicating. For example, in one small area of New York, 10 agencies are tackling the problems of children on probation.

Poverty is found in two general settings, but only one is strongly resistant to advances in the economy as a whole. Poverty, when found in the midst of plenty is relatively easy to deal with. For instance, the children of the impoverished Negroes clustered on a few streets in the comfortable Georgetown