

privilege to be the voice of the poor, to plead their cause in this or any other assembly available to us. It is for us to be the hands of the poor, to implement the spirit of self-help, wherever it is possible, in whatever area of service it may be launched. It is for religious organizations such as our own, to motivate and to inspire the poor, to convince them that inadequacy and inequality will exist no longer, and that they, with us, and with the Government, can succeed in removing the blight of personal and familial impoverishment in this day of opportunity for all.

Monsignor HIGGINS. In a similar vein, the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference adopted last January a resolution pledging vigorous cooperation in the war on poverty. That resolution, which, with your permission, I would like to submit as part of the permanent record of these hearings, calls attention to the peculiar plight of the over 12 million rural people who live in dire poverty. It states that one-fifth of the schoolchildren born in rural America each year are born into poverty-ridden families.

(The resolution referred to follows:)

WAR ON POVERTY

(A resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Urbana, Ill., January 29, 1964)

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference pledges its vigorous cooperation in the "unconditional war on poverty" declared by President Lyndon B. Johnson in his first state of the Union message.

Poverty affects very many persons in rural areas. The percentage of rural families with incomes below the poverty line is almost twice as large as that of urban families. Over 12 million rural people live in dire poverty. One-fifth of the million children born in rural America each year are born into poverty-ridden families. Three-quarters of the families and individuals employed as farm laborers have total annual incomes below nationally accepted standards of adequacy. Rural America has almost three times the proportion of dilapidated and substandard houses as urban America. Rural children receive one-third less medical service than those in and near cities.

We urge the Congress to seriously consider the legislative proposals for fighting poverty, suggested by President Johnson. These fall within the scope of the Federal Government's responsibility, particularly since poverty frequently is found in "pockets" making necessary outside help to break the vicious circle of ignorance, poverty, and despair.

On the other hand, it would be rash to presume that poverty will be removed from rural America through the actions of the Government alone. Indispensable are the efforts of individuals and private organizations at the grassroots level.

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference will join in the fight against poverty both at the Federal and the grassroots levels. At congressional hearings we shall reiterate our support of an expanded rural areas development and area redevelopment program; of the proposed National Service Corps, and laws to protect the rights of migrant workers. Meanwhile, at the grassroots level we shall collaborate with other local leaders in the following remedial programs:

1. Rural areas redevelopment programs are the best tool yet devised to improve education, create new industrial jobs, increase agricultural income and better living conditions in rural counties. The success of RAD programs depends primarily on local leadership and initiative. We shall continue to foster a better understanding of and support for RAD.

2. Vocational training is urgently needed by those rural youths who will not complete college. The rapid and far-reaching changes in secondary school curriculums needed will not occur unless parents and members of local school boards thoroughly understand the issues at stake. We shall persist in our campaign to inject this issue into discussions and publications which help form opinion in rural areas.

3. We shall continue and expand our programs for stabilizing migrant workers who are among the primary victims of poverty in rural areas. We shall encourage large private organizations and agencies of government to build upon and greatly expand the successful but relatively small projects we have begun.