

The elimination of poverty in the United States—probably the richest country in the world, but nevertheless with a huge poverty problem—requires first of all the sharp reduction in the number of our unemployed. Most poverty in the United States results from unemployment.

To reduce unemployment a threefold program is needed:

(1) The stimulation of industry and agriculture so that more people can be employed. This can be done partly by increasing defense and other governmental expenditures but I doubt whether such increase in Federal Government spending is advisable, particularly as the budget is not being balanced. The stimulation of family farms and small industry in poverty areas and among hard-core unemployed families, as provided in titles II and IV of the Economic Opportunity Act is useful, but will not anywhere near solve the huge and persisting problem of unemployment.

(2) The children of our Nation must be given a better education. For several decades, there has been a tremendous shortage of classrooms. The quality of schooling in many areas must be raised to give a chance for increased knowledge not only to the children of the poor but also to all children. While the Economic Opportunity Act does provide considerable funds for education, it is no substitute for a big program for Federal aid to public elementary and secondary schools. Bills providing for such Federal aid have languished in the House of Representatives for a shockingly long period. I urge the House Education and Labor Committee to report out this bill on which it has already held extensive hearings. And I hope the Rules Committee will enable it to come for a vote on the floor well before the 88th Congress adjourns.

(3) Some 5.4 percent of our employable population, about 5 million people, are now unemployed and automation is continually reducing the number of employees needed in many companies. The population of the United States now stands at 191 million. And if the population explosion continues at the present rate by the year 2000 (only 36 short years away) there will be 150 million more people in the United States and surely there will be proportionately fewer jobs and more unemployment and consequently more poverty.

The American Parents Committee has taken no position on the following suggestion, but I cannot refrain from mentioning it here while legislation attempting to reduce poverty is being discussed. I personally feel that along with providing better schooling for our children, the Federal Government should start at once a long-range program to check the population explosion—and to make the two-child family popular and fashionable again. I urge that the United States should finance research in the problems of population control. This is a vital matter that should not be delayed.

But to come back to the Economic Opportunity Act, I would say that it is a big step in the right direction. If I had to choose between the enactment of the bill for Federal aid for public elementary and secondary education and the Economic Opportunity Act, I would choose the former, because it will help many more more children and young people. I am glad to see in the Economic Opportunity Act the emphasis on providing better education for young people. I recognize the problems that the Federal aid for education bills have had