

standard which should prevail is whether a family is "able" to obtain assistance elsewhere, not whether it is "qualified" to obtain such assistance.

In summing up, let me say again that our growing, dynamic society and our productive economy have, by and large, passed by our Indian reservations. These have remained islands of poverty and depression. Efforts at relocation have failed in that only the more enterprising persons have been successfully relocated, thus depriving the home community of leadership talents. Even at the height of the Government-sponsored relocation program in the fifties, the reservation population continued to increase. The reservation communities won't just go away. To solve their problems, effective and comprehensive improvement programs must be started. The present Federal programs of assistance to Indians are, regrettably, small both in size and scope and inadequate to get at the root causes of Indian poverty. On the other hand, programs which could be initiated under this bill could make a start toward the rehabilitation of Indian communities. In doing so, they could have the effect of turning areas of our country which are, at present, a drain on our economy, into true assets, making a useful and valuable contribution to the Nation.

Mr. PERKINS. Go ahead.

Mr. SCHIFTER. Mr. Chairman, my name is Richard Schifter. I appear as general counsel to the Association on American Indian Affairs. In view of the fact that our association has never testified before this committee, I will just say briefly who we are. We are an organization of citizens throughout the United States with members in all 50 States of the Union. Our organization is concerned with the welfare of the American Indians.

We have about 10,000 members and we have been in existence, including our predecessor organization, since about 1909. Our association wishes to endorse H.R. 10440 not as a final solution to the problems of poverty in the United States but as a good first step.

The problem that we face on the Indian reservations is a problem that combines the problems of lack of opportunities in rural areas throughout the United States with the problems of social disorganization in the core cities of the United States. In other words, the Indians have the worst of both problems; rural poverty and urban slums. This is reflected in a great deal of unemployment and the lack of skills of many people and in such matters as broken homes, delinquency, and generally a spirit of hopelessness, that poverty engenders. This spirit encompasses the feeling of a great majority of people on Indian reservations.

I believe that Secretary Udall has indicated to the committee what the problem is in terms of numbers. When we think of unemployment ratios of 15 to 20 percent in other parts of the country, we think that is high. On an Indian reservation that would be low. The average unemployment in the Indian country is about 45 percent and that is actually lowered by the fact that a good many women are employed. Among men, unemployment is usually above 50 percent. You can visualize what this means to a community when more than half of the potential supporters of the families, the breadwinners, are unemployed and there is a feeling that there is no place to go.

There are some myths throughout American society about how the Indians get by. Perhaps I could say a few words about that. Some people think every Indian gets a check from the U.S. Government. Of course, members of the committee know that is not so. There is also talk about oil-rich Indians. There are very, very few in that category. Even those tribes that do have oil or uranium resources have an income that, if divided among all members of the tribe, would