

million individuals who need vocational rehabilitation services to become employable and who would accept such services if they were available at the time they are first needed. Approximately 400,000 additional individuals are added to this number annually, as a result of accident, diseases, and congenital causes. The Secretary of Labor has reported that 12 percent of all of the individuals applying under the manpower development and training program are identified as being physically handicapped. It is undoubtedly true that the most severely handicapped do not make application at all for benefits under this program. If the emotionally ill and mentally retarded are added to this number, the proportion would be much greater. Handicapped people are to be found in every strata of human beings who are eligible for services under the various titles of H.R. 10440. The tendency is going to be to neglect them, unless serious steps are taken in this bill to see that efforts to rehabilitate handicapped people keep pace with general efforts to abolish poverty.

STATE-FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In 1920, the Congress of the United States established a vocational rehabilitation program. The legislation has been revised and the concept of rehabilitation expanded a number of times, notably by Public Law 113 of the 78th Congress (1943) and Public Law 565 of the 83d Congress (1954). This program is administered by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare through the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. At the State level it is administered by State vocational rehabilitation agencies in all of the States and territories. The program operates in all of the States and in all of their subdivisions. It may literally be said that vocational rehabilitation services are being carried through this program into every nook and corner of our country. Economic need is a condition for practically all of its services. If there has ever been a program devoted to constructive efforts to relieve poverty in this country, it is the State-Federal program of rehabilitation. It has learned the hard way the lessons that many others are learning today. In these agencies and in their companion voluntary agencies, principally the rehabilitation centers and the workshops, will be found the knowledge that is required in order to deal successfully with a large proportion of the people with which this bill is concerned. It is significant that the U.S. Department of Labor, through its manpower development and training program, is making contracts with rehabilitation agencies throughout the country to carry on demonstrations of how the economically and socially deprived may be prepared for employment.

The State-Federal vocational rehabilitation program is a successful one. Currently, it is rehabilitating over 110,000 individuals annually. It is estimated that the number of persons rehabilitated will increase to 133,000 in the 1965 fiscal year. It is significant that the number of people being rehabilitated annually today by the State rehabilitation agencies is more than one-half of the number that the Secretary of Labor estimates will be involved in the work-training program under H.R. 10440.

Services provided handicapped people under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act include medical and psychological diagnosis and evaluation, counseling and guidance, medical services, vocational training, placement, and followup on the job. These are the same services that are going to be required to help millions of individuals who may not be physically or mentally impaired in the usual sense but who have many of the same problems. The techniques for applying these services practiced by the rehabilitation agencies, public and voluntary, are the techniques that are going to be found effective in dealing with such individuals.

Rehabilitation agencies have the confidence of their State governments and the confidence of the Congress of the United States, as has been demonstrated in many ways. These agencies are in a position to make a vital contribution to the success of any antipoverty program. To ignore their experience, would be foolhardy.

H.R. 10440, as now written, mentions vocational rehabilitation services only one time. This is in section 204 which lists vocational rehabilitation as among the fields with which community action programs will be concerned. There is no mention of the utilization of the State vocational rehabilitation agencies in this poverty program. The testimony of administration witnesses has given no indication as to how vocational rehabilitation will be involved in this program or how the State vocational rehabilitation agencies will be utilized. We believe, therefore, that we have real reason for concern that physically and mentally impaired persons may be neglected under this program.