

ever, it is a step in the right direction and undoubtedly one of the most important pieces of legislation that will ever come before this committee.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am well aware of the vast commitments the United States has undertaken to contain communism and to maintain peace in the world, to open the new frontier of outer space, to create a great society here at home. Gentlemen, I submit that of all these goals, the most difficult to achieve will be that closest to home, the creation of the Great Society. Yet up to this point, that goal is the one which has received the least attention over the years from the Federal Government.

Make no mistake about it, our great metropolitan cities are the nerve centers of our Nation—the centers of our culture, business and industry, education—of our very civilization itself. The day is long since past when the United States was a nation of farmers, when the frontier and the land of opportunity lay in the unclaimed and undeveloped vastness of our plains and mountains. Yesterday the land was the frontier, tomorrow perhaps it will be space, but today the frontier of opportunity is the city.

The city today is not just the port of entry for the immigrant—both from foreign shores and from the depressed regions of our own Nation—it is the destination. To our borders daily flock thousands of young and old seeking a better life, seeking an opportunity to partake of our unprecedented prosperity. But for far too many their dreams of opportunity have turned out to be nightmares of despair. Unpropertied and jobless, millions of our citizens have been crowded into the old deteriorating areas of our cities to create slums and ghettos from which there is today little hope of escape.

At the same time, our upper and middle economic classes have been fleeing to the suburbs, leaving the central cities to fend for themselves. And fended we have. But the task, gentlemen, is becoming too much for us to handle on a piecemeal basis with a bit of assistance here and there from the States and Federal Government.

The plus economy, with the high gross national product, the highest in history, and on the other hand the pockets of poverty and misery, remind me of the preamble to the "Tale of Two Cities."

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times: it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we are faced with no less of a task than creating a new middle class in our great central cities. This is a task in the best American tradition and a task worthy of our best efforts. But it is also a task which we can hope to accomplish only by marshaling all the forces and all the resources at our command and working together as never before.

The bill before you today will help the cities to plan, develop, and carry forward comprehensive programs to develop our physical and human resources. It will enable us—indeed require us—to bring all our governmental sources to bear on the solution of these problems. It will enable selected cities to rebuild or restore entire slum or run-down neighborhoods. It will make it possible to improve and in-