

ondary Education Act. I am Mrs. Edward F. Ryan, of Manchester, Mass., chairman for legislation of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, whose membership is approximately 11,750,000 parents and teachers.

We wish to express our enthusiastic support of several proposals of this bill. We in national PTA regard the disparities in our educational system as one of our major and most demanding problems, and particularly the very inadequate education of millions of children in inner cities and other depressed areas. We have seen that it is hard to get a "handle" on improving the education of these children, partly because of inadequate finances, partly because of their own inadequate backgrounds. In all too many classrooms teachers and students have a hard time finding common ground for learning, even to suffering from deep mutual distrust. Yet it is of the utmost importance that these children be educated, for as this committee has shown there is no other road to breaking the poverty cycle for millions of children now growing up under great disadvantages.

It is our observation that the National Teacher Corps is a unique instrument for developing the kind of opportunities these children need, because the teaching preparation for these internes is developed specifically for teaching disadvantaged children, with teaching assignments closely related to their academic programs, and continuous contact between the training institution and the supervising school staff. We are advised by leaders in the profession that these programs are filling a need not hitherto met, are truly innovative. The NEA's National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards is using 14 Teacher Corps programs as demonstration centers in various parts of the country. There is an additional advantage to our schools, as Dr. Webb just mentioned, in that the Corps members are selected from those who have not previously prepared for teaching, and are therefore a needed addition to the number of highly qualified teachers.

We in PTA are particularly pleased with the emphasis in the National Teacher Corps program upon the student teachers' working with the parents and communities of their children. In Lowell, Mass., for instance, where the teams are working in part with non-English-speaking children, the program director points out that by going into their homes the Corps members learn to understand the background of the students and at the same time can alleviate the fears prevalent among the parents, thus helping to break down the polarity between home and school which is a major problem in disadvantaged areas. The Corps members are also working with children individually and, through the new techniques they are learning, carry over the individualizing programs into the classroom.

This is one of the most important parts of the whole program.

Of course they also do remedial work and carry on dramatic and other activities which the teachers have not had time to do. But the chief reason among many why the Lowell school administration is grateful and enthusiastic for its Teacher Corps group comes from its hope to use them next year for in-service training for the regular teaching staff.

In a series of month-long programs with corpsmen for 10 teachers at a time, the administration hopes to enable the teachers to—and I