

Mr. SHRIVER. I don't know whom you were listening to in the 1960 campaign. You could not have been listening to President Kennedy who never said there were 15 million poor people in the United States in that campaign.

Mr. GARDNER. Did he quote any figures at that time? It seems to me I remember the statement was made that 15 million Americans went to bed at night without proper food and various other things.

Mr. SHRIVER. Regardless of what you remember or I remember, the actual figures are as follows:

Let me say when we started this program the Council of Economic Advisers estimated there were 34½ million people who were living below what they picked as a statistical differentiation between those who were poor and those not poor.

The statistical differentiation was based simply on the \$3,000 per annum cash flow to a family of four. That standard has since been improved but the number remains approximately the same; namely, the numbers were right at the beginning, they still are right.

In the 2½ years we have been in existence, that figure has gone from 34.5 down closer to 31.7 or 32. So there has been both a numerical reduction and a percentage reduction in the total number of poor people since the start of this program.

We don't claim the credit for having taken all those people out of poverty but I am very glad that they have come out because if in the same period more people have gone into poverty I think I would be in much tougher shape with this committee than I am. Whether we were responsible for them going into poverty or not I would be blamed or we would be blamed.

Third, there has been a steady reduction in the total number of people in poverty and the percentage of people in poverty since 1961 when President Kennedy came into office.

Mr. GARDNER. I yield to my colleague from New York.

Mr. GOODELL. I would like to put this matter in perspective. The report of the Council of Economic Advisers refers to the percentage of poor families in the United States based upon the \$3,000 income figure that you refer it.

In 1950 there were 29.9 percent of our people in poverty. By 1960, it was down to 20.3 percent, roughly from 30 to 20 percent.

Since 1960 it has gone down to 16.5 percent. So actually in the last 6 years our pace of eliminating poverty has slowed in this country over the pace from 1950 to 1960.

Now, that is from the report of the Council of Economic Advisers in terms of the percentage of poor families. You modestly said you don't attribute the drop entirely to poverty programs since the poverty program got underway. I think it is very clear that there are a great many other factors involved in the reduction in the percentage of poor families in this country.

Mr. SHRIVER. Let me add to that that the rate of reduction will probably get slower and slower because the people we are now dealing with are harder and harder to take out of poverty. It is a little bit like sending up a rocket or airplane or going down in the submarine.

It is easy to get the first 500 or a thousand feet under the water. But the problems as you go deeper don't go up arithmetically; they go up geometrically.