

if they were to break through the cycle of poverty. No one, today, has definitive figures on what the reduction in the total poor has been in the short span of two-and-a-half years, although it is estimated that the war on poverty has affected the lives of some 9 million people.

William Pitt once said that "poverty is no disgrace, but it is damned annoying." This is no longer the case. Poverty is both a damned annoyance and a national disgrace Americans are no longer willing to ignore. It is intolerable to find a fifth or more of the nation's population living in poverty while the remainder

What is clear is that in that short period of time, we have demonstrated that the job *can* be done; we have established the usefulness of a broad battery of innovative techniques for doing the job; and we have alerted the conscience of the richest country in the world to the flat and unalterable necessity to do the enjoy the highest standard of living in the world. It is this contrast—between the existence of widespread poverty in the midst of an affluent plenty—which

job. This is no time to ponder the dismemberment of the Office of Economic Opportunity, both the focus and the format of the effort. The OEO has, on the whole, done a spectacular job. There is no doubt in my mind it has a still more spectacular job to do in the future. If there is anything wrong with the war on poverty it is that it has not yet reached enough people, has not reached all of those who, in the words of the President when he launched the war on poverty, "live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both."

As a nation we have discarded once and for all the belief that poverty is an evil to be endured, one that has always been with us and always will be. We are bent not upon alleviating poverty, but on eliminating it and we must never lose sight of that goal.

has spurred us, as a nation, into a concerted assault upon poverty as an institution.

In addition to the moral imperatives facing us, a real reduction in poverty would result in a tremendous growth in economic and personal output, an output far greater than any the world has ever seen. We have "a unique opportunity and obligation to prove the success of our system; to disprove those cynics and critics at home and abroad who question our purpose and our competence." The United States is the only country in the world which can mobilize the financial and human resources which can truly eliminate poverty.

But despite the readiness of the American people to pursue this struggle (a recent Harris poll demonstrates that 60 percent of the population is fully committed to the effort) we appear to be suffering a loss of confidence. Cut-backs in the funding of present programs have been made, others threatened, and delays in the implementation of new programs have been recommended. Worst of all, it is being seriously proposed that the OEO itself be dismantled.

It is ironic that at a time when the American people, for the first time in the history of this or any other nation, are fully prepared to undertake a total war on poverty that this trend to retrenchment should occur, that we should find ourselves fighting just to hold our ground.

We are all impatient to see quick results. While it is commonplace in industry, when billions of dollars are spent on research, to accept a 10 percent return on the investment, yet in dealing with human beings, who are far more unpredictable, we want 100 percent results and we want them immediately.

We tend to forget that it is only a little more than two-and-a-half years since the Economic Opportunity Act was passed. It is important to consider in detail just what has been accomplished in the administration of the OEO in that short span of time.

At the very outset, the OEO was directed to come up with a complex series of new programs. It was directed to create, without delay, a nationwide network of Job Corps centers providing education and training for America's most disadvantaged young people; a network of local community action agencies; a system of technical assistance to be transmitted via the States; a massive program of youth employment and work-study; programs for migrants in education, housing and related areas; new kinds of loans to the smallest farm and business units in the country; a domestic equivalent of the Peace Corps; a work-experience program for welfare families that would get them off welfare; and a system of coordinating the poverty-related actions of all Federal agencies.

In the sheer scope of new program and the need to mobilize resources, no other legislation in recent memory begins to compare with the scope and range of the