

Mr. CARTER. That is right. The OEO, I want to repeat the principal role of the Welfare Administration is in the provision of funds for people who are financially really at the lowest economic rung. Of the 30 million-odd that are identified as poor, only 8 million people are supported under the public assistance programs. In addition, there are many people who are working every day, a very significant proportion of the poor, who are poor, are working every day, but simply cannot earn enough money to live, nonetheless.

And this is a condition that has existed for years. This is nothing new. Now OEO was called into existence because we recognized that we have this problem despite our growing prosperity, in spite of our falling unemployment rate we have this continuing problem of poverty. We need to seek new answers and find new ways of addressing it. There are many programs that make a contribution to doing something about poverty. But we need an agency that has the flexibility and the mandate to test out and search for new ways of getting at the problem, not that it is going to run everything itself. That would be like saying that because there are education programs that are conducted in many agencies around the Government, they ought to be all in the Office of Education.

We don't take that position. The same thing can be said of health. We are saying that what we have here is an agency whose mandate and charge is to find new ways and then try to get the existing agencies and organizations to adopt those new ways and to build them into their ongoing programs. That is the role and function of OEO, as I see it.

Mr. QUIE. If this function were given to you, would you be capable of administering it?

Mr. CARTER. I think that that is a question that portrays a departure on the basic assumption. I don't see any reason to speculate on that. We have an agency that is doing a fine job. Why would we even think about just turning that over to somebody else? We have somebody that is ongoing, it is making a contribution, it works. Why should we even get into the speculation about whether X agency or Y agency can do the job?

Mr. QUIE. You are proposing a gradual phasing out of title V, which assumes that you will at least have the role of any flexibility and innovation in the title V type programs in the future. If you can do it there, why can't you do it in other areas of helping the poor as well?

Mr. CARTER. What we have said, I think in the administration proposal is that we undertook a demonstration in 1964 with respect to title V primarily through, in fact virtually exclusively through, existing organizations. We have tested this out. We have found some things that are valuable. We are building it into an ongoing mechanism which exists. We are not taking something which exists and creating an altogether new mechanism to deal with it.

This is a program, we are trying to search out new ways to deal with this problem in relation to an existing mechanism for public welfare assistance. We have found, we think, ways in which that can be made effective. We are trying to build those ways into the existing section 409.