

Nation—through assistance of members of the technical action panels of the Farmers Home Administration.

We are working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of Interior and its representatives to help us identify those who need our help in areas in which they have major responsibility.

We are working with the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, and only recently concluded an agreement which makes our economic opportunity loan program more readily available to the handicapped.

We are anxious to work with any group that will help us, whether it be other government agencies at any level, the urban league, chambers of commerce, neighborhood service centers, or any other community-based organization. We work closely with community action agencies and we will continue to work with SBDC's wherever they are authorized and funded by OEO or any other agency.

In addition to our staff of 4,200 employees, we are utilizing the services of our 3,000-member Service Corps of Retired Executives. We plan to expand SCORE to 5,000 members in fiscal year 1968. Just last week I sent a letter to each one of our more than 1,600 advisory council members soliciting their assistance in identifying people who need help and asking the council members to help us expand our Outreach efforts.

We also are looking to the future, Mr. Chairman.

We are currently engaged in intensive studies and evaluations which we believe will increase the effectiveness of the program. Among these are studies (1) evaluating results of the EOL program to date and seeking ways to improve its operation with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of management training efforts, and (2) examining the socioeconomic conditions in declining neighborhoods in our metropolitan areas. In this second study, we are looking for ways in which SBA's programs can contribute to a reversal of the decline in many neighborhoods in metropolitan areas.

As President Johnson counseled me when I took the oath of the office, "Let's tell the country that the Small Business Administration has reopened doors that were closed too long." In immediate context, his words referred to lifting the moratorium on loans.

But in the broader view, I saw in them a directive that the agency get down to the business of reopening still more economic doors: doors that the trends of the last few decades—the urbanization, the automation, the explosions in population and knowledge—have tended to close to many ambitious but less fortunate citizens.

Certainly this stands high among the domestic challenges of our time, and we at SBA are proud to have a central role in meeting it. Thanks specifically to the improvements voted by the Congress last October to title IV, I believe SBA has the tools needed to meet the challenge. I believe the gains we have made since November show we are making strong progress in that direction. Further, the administration and the Congress have joined together to provide a larger EOL loan program for SBA to administer in fiscal year 1968. The planned \$60 million program next year will allow the agency to further extend the coverage of this essential program.

Mr. Chairman, I, of course, endorse the content of H.R. 8311 and I