

grams under the dedicated, imaginative, and enthusiastic leadership given to this cause by Sargent Shriver.

I am convinced that by any reasonable assessment the scene in rural America today indicates that very significant forward strides have been made.

Two weeks ago I spent 4 days examining rural development and poverty programs in Iowa, Mississippi, Alabama, and Indiana, seeing for myself some of the items we will discuss today.

Along on the tour were officials from HUD, HEW, OEO, Labor, Commerce, and the Bureau of the Budget, as well as local USDA personnel.

We wanted to see how our Federal programs are doing in rural America. We wanted to talk firsthand with the local people who administer the programs. We especially wanted to talk with the people the programs are designed to help.

We visited 18 different projects and developments and 11 individual farms. We talked with 4-year-old children in Headstart. We talked with a 67-year-old senior citizen who works on a Nelson amendment project in Indiana—for the first time in his life he had a bank account.

There was not time enough to see everything. But what we did see was impressive in scope, variety, and results. It ranged from a \$7 million flakeboard plant now being built at Oxford, Miss., to a small welding shop on a farm in Indiana, made possible through a \$2,500 OEO training loan.

What we saw was a start, a beginning—and a strong beginning, with a growing momentum. It is indicative of what is taking place throughout rural America.

Today people in most of the Nation's counties have formed committees to come to grips with local problems of economic, social, and cultural stagnation.

Scattered across this country, more than 3,150 community resources development committees and 562 multicounty committees are working today on job development and training, housing, health, education, recreation, and other services and facilities beneficial to rural communities.

Thousands of young Americans are finding new opportunities through Headstart, Upward Bound, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the Job Corps. They are getting medical and dental care that many of them never had before.

Millions of older people have been helped to sign up for social security and medicare. Many of them are finding an end to loneliness in centers for our senior citizens.

Back of these accomplishments is a well-planned effort, spark-plugged and coordinated by OEO.

OEO's community action programs and the USDA's technical action panels are working together to help create a new dimension in rural life.

The Community Action Programs or CAP's, as you know, are project grants made directly to public and private nonprofit groups in American communities. About \$253 million in CAP grants went to rural communities in fiscal 1967. In fiscal 1968 this total is expected to rise to \$402 million.