

For all these reasons we hope that the community action program will continue within OEO. We hope that it will not be spun off to an existing agency where it will lose its vibrant and crucial role in the war on poverty.

Criticism has been directed at the community action program because of the controversial nature of some of the activities which they have sponsored. This is understandable because local CAP agencies bring together people who never before talked together, or perhaps to put it more accurately, who were hardly aware of each other's existence. Bringing together diverse elements of community life may result in conflict. Yet this conflict has often served to sharpen up local anti-poverty programs. It has helped to make clear to the majority of the community who live above the poverty level what the real and urgent needs of the poor are.

The AFL-CIO supports the "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in community action agencies. The war on poverty was never intended to be a dole for the poor, but rather it was conceived as an opportunity for the poor to become involved in antipoverty programs to assure the fact that these programs respond to their real needs.

We are encouraged to note that of the almost 92,000 citizens serving on community action agency boards, committees and advisory councils, over 42,000 or about 45 percent, come from among those being helped. For this, the OEO deserves to be commended.

In 1964, when President Meany testified on the original Economic Opportunity Act, he placed the AFL-CIO squarely behind the Job Corps idea when he said:

"... this section—Title I(A)—has great potential. These young people can be taught the routine of holding a job, the rhythm of it; the use of tools, the feeling for them, the familiarity with them, how to take care of them; the whole concept of being part of a work-group, with common obligations and, sometimes, common grievances. These simple experiences, which most of us take for granted are of the greatest importance.

The trainees can gain from this the self-confidence they may have lacked before. They can emerge from the program fully able to read, write, and figure, knowing what it means to have a job. And they will thereby be better equipped to make their way in the world."

We supported the Job Corps in 1964; we support it in 1967. The idea which President Meany supported, has become a reality of which we can all be proud. The Job Corps offers young people who come from the poorest environments and the bleakest backgrounds an opportunity to develop useful work experience, a chance to get a basic education and chance to live in a new and healthy environment.

And perhaps, most important of all, it gives them an opportunity to rechannel their sense of futility and frustration into a new sense of pride in themselves and in their value as human beings.

The Job Corps has been criticized because of the cost per trainee, the number of dropouts and disturbances in the centers. Current figures indicate that the cost per trainee has been lowered considerably, that more boys and girls are staying in the Job Corps and are staying longer, and the problem of discipline within the centers is under control. Anyhow, such arguments come from those with limited vision.

We see the Job Corps as a human reclamation program taking these young people off the streets, away from meaningless lives full of frustration and anger and bringing them back into society where they can