

America is rich enough and powerful enough to take care of its poor—not in the way of charity, but in dynamic programs to change their very style of life. If the War on Poverty succeeds, even in a generation as some believe it will require, there is an enormous potential for far-reaching changes in all of American life. The War on Poverty is an investment program, *not* a relief program.

Too many persons, far too many, have not realized the most basic and most promising part of the entire anti-poverty effort, that is that OEO-CAP represents an entirely new and highly sensible approach to the problems of human development which have persisted, yes, even thrived in our prosperous and expanding economy. The momentum of our economic revolution has dashed aside an entire segment of our society that was the least prepared to cope with this rapidly changing kaleidoscope of progress. OEO-CAP's approach is remedial rather than custodial action for those disadvantaged: rehabilitation instead of relief, dignity and decency rather than dependency and despondency.

The War on Poverty will not be won instantly, not in two or three years, nor by edict. In this age of automation, everybody wants and expects quick action—results now. I call it in instant coffee age—a spoonful of powdered coffee and a dash of hot water and “bingo” its ready! Rebuilding human beings obviously cannot be done so fast.

There are two basic approaches to the problem of poverty. The first is *alleviation* Welfare. The aim of this approach is to make poverty bearable for those who are poor. It keeps the poor alive so that relatively speaking, very few people starve to death in our country. But there are millions suffering from malnutrition. Alleviative programs make it a little easier to be poor by providing recreation, Christmas baskets and other amenities. Alleviative programs do much good. To argue against them is like arguing against Santa Claus! No one of us would want to curtail any phase of alleviation.

The other approach to poverty is *elimination*. This is the OEO approach. It does not seek to make poverty bearable but to do away with it; not to soften it but to cure it! It recognizes that the only way to do away with poverty is to place power in the hands of the powerless. If a man is illiterate, this approach wants to give him the power of being able to read, if he is sick, this approach wants to give him the power of being healthy.

If he cannot obtain justice, this approach wants to give him the power of good legal aid. If he is jobless, this approach wants him to have the power of a job. If he is voiceless, this approach wants him to have political power. If he is exploited, this approach wants him to have bargaining power.

The greatest challenge of all of Community Action is getting and keeping the interested participation of the entire community—the rich, the just well-to-do and the poor—thus making the community whole. A Community Action agency which works and plan *with* and *not* for the poor. And, I add with emphasis, a Community Action Agency which is interested in and works to eliminate the causes of poverty with its attendant evils; not one which only alleviates poverty. There is a tremendous difference.

Yes, that difference is precisely that which separates an old-line bureaucratic agency and a new-line agency in the revolutionary mold of EOA 1964, which is trying to teach the poor to help themselves, and thereby not only eliminate the causes of poverty, but also the OEO Agency and our jobs.

The poor people of America are not revolutionary, (yet). All they want is to be given the opportunity to earn and own a piece of affluent America. They must be made healthy, functionally literate, trained for a job, put on one, and kept on one.

There are no less than 1,000,000 reasons why the War on Poverty in Kentucky should be waged and won. All these reasons have different details and they pose almost that many different approaches! But stretching all the problems to the utmost simplicity, brings forth one word to cover the entire objective: people. At least 1,000,000 people in poverty in Kentucky. They need your help.

I want to thank the Chairman and the Committee for giving me the opportunity to appear and give this testimony on this highly important matter.