

3332 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

fatal accident rate of rural roads is "35% greater than is for the highway and injury accidents which happen twice as often on these rural country roads". Since 1962, the rural death rate has been on the increase; the death rate increase is 10% since 1961 to 1964. There are many factors contributing to these accidents, but let us suggest only one step that might be taken which could substantially reduce highway accidents.

The Tennessee Highway Department found that only 10% of their 400,000 road signs were adequate. Iowa found that 66,000 of 100,700 road signs on primary rural highways needed to be replaced because they were inadequate. If our rural community could be encouraged to replace some of their low income people to rebuild and replace road signs, it can greatly reduce accidents and deaths in rural areas. Our rural roads are today the most unsafe roads in America and are our majority of draw-backs in rural development.

The annual rate of bed-disabling injuries per 1,000 persons per year (1960 figures) is:

Rural farm	87
Rural nonfarm	73
Urban	60

The rate of workdays lost (per 100 "usually working" people) due to motor vehicle accidents (1960 figures) is:

Rural farm population.....	138.0
Rural nonfarm population.....	55.2
Urban population.....	39.3

The average number of days per year per person of restricted activity due to illness or injury in 1957-59 was:

	<i>Days</i>
Farm workers	17
All occupation groups.....	12

The percent of the population with chronic limitation of activity due to illness or injury in 1957-59 was:

	<i>Percent</i>
Rural farm population.....	12.4
Rural nonfarm population.....	9.5
Urban population	9.7

The number of deaths from machinery on farms is 1½ times the number of deaths involving machinery in industrial places. Among the major industries, only mining and extractive industries and construction have higher death rates from accidents than agriculture. More consideration of these facts should be given in rural anti-poverty planning.

Transportation

We have lost many of the rural bus lines. Freeways have ended many bus stops from many rural communities. The small town taxi has been "done in" by high insurance rates. This leaves the young and old stranded in many rural areas. Experiments are needed to develop new forms of transportation for rural areas.

Community planning

If we are to avoid the traffic congestion, smog, water pollution, blight, and the other mistakes of metropolitan areas, we need area planning which metropolitan areas have only now begun to develop. We need area wide comprehensive planning and zoning and industrial development. Local government should be aided through both technical assistance and vehicles for inter-governmental cooperation.

Georgia rural development districts are a good example of some of the potential for this kind of rural equivalent to the metropolitan planning council. We support, as a part of the Target Program of the National Farmers Union, the Rural Community Development District Program. Without the ways and means for local governments to cooperate and to get technical help they will not serve the needs of their communities. Most rural communities do not have the need for nor the finances to support the technical know-how, the grantsmanship talent, nor even the library resources required to aid a part-time public official in rural areas.

We testified recently before the Senate Housing Subcommittee on this issue and urged that flexibility be given to the composition to allow for representation by the CAA, RAD and TAP groups.