

There may be some differences between them; there may be some similarities. Would you think the Congress this year should place high priority on working out a practical means to get the private enterprise system deeply involved in rehabilitation of existing housing?

Mr. REUTHER. I very much favor that, and I would hope that the Congress would act on it at a very early date.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Reuther, I understand you have created a citizens' crusade against poverty. I am also trying to find a way to get poor people involved in this process.

Do you think the involvement of the poor in the rehabilitation of the city, in their own neighborhood, and in their own housing units, is important?

Mr. REUTHER. I think it is absolutely essential. I do not believe that you can change the basic character of a community without involving the active participation of the people who make up that community. In our Citizens' Crusade, of which I have the privilege of being the national chairman, we are working to develop that active participation. We have set up two training centers and the UAW has put money into it, the Ford Foundation has given us a grant, and we are going to try to train a thousand community leaders from the slums to go into their neighborhoods and to help mobilize and generate the forces to do exactly what you are talking about—to involve the people themselves.

This can't be something from above that you hand down. They need economic help, they need guidance, they need leadership training, they need all this kind of assistance, but you have to give these people a sense of participating, in shaping their own lives, in rebuilding their own communities. This is not only a democratic idea, it is an essential idea if the job is going to be done.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, may I have permission to ask one more question?

Chairman PROXMIRE. Yes, indeed.

Senator PERCY. I will precede this question, Mr. Reuther, with a statement, that discrimination within industry by management has, in the past, contributed to the "nonemployment" of members of minority groups.

Do you feel that there can be a real involvement of the poor, a large part of the poor being nonwhite, until such time as we tear down the racial barriers that exist within certain craft unions?

How can you expand rehabilitation into a growth industry, if you can't get the very people who are now unemployed into the craft unions, and train them to become members of the working force in the great rebuilding job we face today?

Mr. REUTHER. I might say that, in 11 years of the AFL-CIO merger, there have been many disappointments that I have shared, but among the most important of those disappointments is the failure of the American labor movement to demonstrate both the courage and the compassion to do something more meaningful about the problem that you pose.

I think that our democratic credentials will be in question as long as we try to hide behind pious declarations on paper. People are going to evaluate our commitment in terms of what we do to implement our