

the motivation he can get. But the rest of us need motivation, too—and enough of it to take whatever action is necessary to stop this incredible stunting, deterioration, and destruction of the character, spirit, and potential for decent living of so many millions of our men, women, and children.

But worse than apathy. Nineteen sixty-seven was the year that the Federal Government passed legislation to withhold federal funds for the support of any and all needy children who might be unlucky enough to be among the percentage of children to be excluded by an arbitrary federal ceiling on such aid. The children who would lose federal aid in this grim lottery would have to look to the states and the localities for the necessities of life; and many of these states and localities, even with federal aid, provide only a fraction of the living needs of destitute children and adults. (In one state the average monthly payment for a family is \$35—for all of its needs: food, rent, clothing, etc.)

Such federal legislation seems to indicate the frustration and inability of the Government to deal with the critical problem of massive destitution.

Another example of this policy of retreat is the Federal Government's cutback of its Medicaid program for individuals and families not on welfare who cannot pay for needed medical care. That cutback is to be carried out by congressional ceilings based upon public assistance levels, however inadequate those levels might be, and are, in many states. As a result, millions of Americans living below the poverty line will not be able to qualify for federally aided Medicaid, which means they will be deprived of needed medical care. This in the face of a shocking toll of sickness and disability which accounts for some 40 percent of all welfare costs in New York State and elsewhere throughout the Nation. Deprived of federal funds, New York State was forced to cut back its program, too. Some 2,200,000 persons potentially eligible for help in case of illness and 1 million beneficiaries were cut out of the program.

Does this federal approach to our gravest internal social and economic problems reflect a domestic social isolationism that augurs not less, but more, welfare and other poverty burdens? Is it meant to punish public welfare recipients and other needy by depriving them of help because they are unable to cope with dependency-making factors over which they have little or no control: sickness, disability, dependent infancy and childhood, old age, illiteracy, unrealistic job requirements, discrimination, and all the rest of it?

Hopefully not. What it does indicate, perhaps, is that government must rethink a lot of its services—welfare, health, education—new and old. And the private sector must do likewise, especially in its recruitment, job-training, health benefits, and other areas. Out of that reconsideration should come recognition that the public and the private sectors will have to fit their policies and operations to meet the demands of 1968 and the years ahead.

If every physically and mentally able individual is to be given an opportunity to earn a living, the leadership responsible for our economy, for its work requirements, and for the availability of the educational, vocational, health, and other services our citizens require to meet those work requirements, must make those services available so that the opportunity to earn a living is a fact and not a theory.

“* * * ABOVE ALL ELSE, HOW TO EARN A LIVING”

To do this we need to regroup, refocus, and recast a number of welfare, health, and educational activities; contract to private industry, labor, and other private sectors some activities now conducted by government or not at all; and enlist the active cooperation of thousands of citizen organizations in these public-private operations.

This proposed reorienting, rebasing, and extension of existing welfare, education, and health activities might be called employability insurance. We have many kinds of insurance now, of course—unemployment, old age, survivors, health, disability. But all of them are, in one way or another, tied to unemployment—as they should be. But what we need is employability insurance, a program of coordinated action in key fields focused on employability, on making and keeping people employable and employed.

Employability insurance would begin in the school, where every child would be taught—above all else—how to earn a living. New, revitalized, and extended work-oriented instruction and guidance would be given, through management-labor teams, in actual work settings—stores, offices, shops, hospitals, farms, restaurants, factories—under the immediate direction of managers, foremen, and other supervisors and employees in commerce and industry.