

First, about its identification and measurement:

For many years the national unemployment rate was regarded as an adequate measure of sufficiency or insufficiency of job opportunity. By this measure we have done very well indeed. The overall rate stood at 6.7 percent in 1961 and was still at 5.7 percent in 1963. It was down to 4.5 percent by 1965, to 3.8 percent in 1967. For January 1968, the rate was 3.5 percent, lowest since the Korean conflict.

For some time now we have been high lighting in our reports on employment and unemployment the situation among the groups which have shared least in the general improvement: Negro and other "minority group" workers, with unemployment still twice as great as white workers; teenagers, with unemployment averaging 12.9 percent in 1967, not much improved since 1961; nonfarm laborers, with an average rate of 7.6 percent in 1967; and so on. Moreover, it has been increasingly emphasized that while almost 3 million persons are unemployed at any one time, approximately 11 million experience joblessness at some time during the year, and that of these over a million are unemployed for a total of at least half a year.

But we have also come to realize that this traditional concept of unemployment—which includes only those who are actively searching for works and reports nothing of the frequent inadequacy of what they find—is misleading as a measure of hard-core personal economic disability. It takes little or no account of the fact that hundreds of thousands of men and women are not working because of remediable physical and emotional handicaps. Others are not looking for work because they lack the basic minimum of literacy or skill, or have been repeatedly rebuffed, or cannot find transportation to where the jobs are located, or cannot find child-care facilities. Still others have only part-time work although they need and are looking for full-time employment. Millions with full-time jobs cannot earn enough to support their families decently.

In November of 1966, we conducted a set of experimental surveys in 15 slum areas in some of the Nation's largest cities, designed to illustrate these problems of incapacity, underutilization, nonparticipation and substandard employment which lies beyond "unemployment" in the traditional sense of the term. In addition to an average "unemployment" rate of 10 percent, we found another 7 percent of involuntary part-time workers; and of those with full-time jobs, more than one-fifth were earning less than \$60 per week. Outside the labor force we found a large number of men so estranged from the world of work, and of women convinced that they will be barred from work, that they were not even seeking jobs. At least one out of three residents in these slums was found to have a serious problem related to employment.

From these pilot surveys the Department has been moving into a regular and systematic program of information and analysis concerning the economic pathology of the slums. The Bureau of Labor Statistics conducted methodological work in 1967 in order to tackle special problems of communication, reduce the "undercount" of slum residents (especially young Negro males), and achieve a better understanding of job-seeking methods utilized by casual workers without good training, experience or connections. We are now activating the regular survey program by training interviewers, preparing forms and instructions, selecting neighborhood samples, and so on. In the course of this year we will be getting regular and reliable information not only describing and measuring employment problems (going beyond the traditional concept of "unemployment") in the slums but also analyzing causes and pointing to the necessary remedies. This information will be indispensable in appraising results of efforts such as the Concentrated Employment Program, the Model Cities Program, and the JOBS program.

In the meantime, we have developed a method for using reliable working estimates of the unemployment situation (largely in terms of the traditional definition of "unemployment") *on a city-by-city* basis. This is being done for the 20 largest metropolitan areas. The first complete report on these 20 areas is being released today. (A preliminary report on 15 of them was released several weeks ago.)

These reports are based on annual averages of 12 monthly surveys during 1967. They include breakdowns as between the metropolitan area as a whole and the center city (in the case of 14 of the 20 areas); on the basis of race (for all 20 areas and cities); and age and sex (for most of the individual 20 areas and 20 central cities, and for all the cities together and the areas together).

I mention here only a little of what these new compilations show, for their largest usefulness will be to the citizens and public officials in each of these areas—who have so long had to work in the dark without reliable, detailed data about their own particular unemployment situation.