need, cleaning up our air and water, and the other myriad of necessary tasks that must rank high on our list of national priorities.

So long as, and to the extent that, private industry fails to provide the needed jobs, government should provide them by acting as employer of last resort.

The crucial actions required on the wage front are to broaden the coverage and to increase the minimum wages provided for under the Fair Labor Standards Act. According to the Social Security Administration, 1.9 million families with 9.5 million members in all, including 5.4 million children under age 18, were poor in 1966, even though the family head worked full time throughout the year. By the most recent estimate available, another 600,000 persons not attached to families were in the same plight in 1964.

The minimum wage for those covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act prior to 1966 went to $1.60 per hour as of February 1968. A worker fully employed 52 weeks a year at that wage earns slightly less than the Council's 1966 minimum consumption standard of $3,335 for a nonfarm family of four, and with prices continuing to rise the gap will grow. For workers first brought under coverage of the act in 1966, the current minimum wage is only $1.15 per hour. Altogether, approximately two-fifths of all persons in families classified by the Council as poor in 1966 either worked full time themselves or were members of families headed by full-time workers. Yet, although the Council concedes that minimum wage legislation contributes to the elimination of poverty, it fails to call for further improvement of that legislation.

On the income maintenance front, the war on poverty has only begun to nibble at the flanks of the enemy. The last session of Congress enacted a disgracefully inadequate increase in social security benefits. When the new benefit levels become effective, those whose entire incomes consist of benefits at the bottom of the scale will receive roughly two-fifths—if they are single—to one-half—if they have eligible spouses—of what they need to lift them out of poverty, in accordance with the standard applied by the Council.

As the Council's report says, if Congress had accepted the minimum $70 social security benefit and other improvements proposed by the administration, an additional 500,000 aged people would have been freed from poverty. But $70 a month for a single person, or $105 for a couple, is still a poverty income. Canada, with a substantially lower per capita income than ours, is able to pay a minimum benefit of $210 per month as a matter of right to every retired couple without other income.

The pitifully small increases in social security benefits enacted last year were coupled with punitive measures against welfare recipients reminiscent of the Elizabethan poor laws. Welfare payments, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation benefits and other income maintenance programs, as well as social security, still provide only poverty incomes to large numbers and, in some cases, to the great majority, of those dependent upon them. Many more are denied even the grossly inadequate payments provided under existing programs.

The glaring gaps and inadequacies in the Nation's income maintenance programs must be filled without delay. If we mean what we say about waging war on poverty, we will proceed with all possible speed