

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

JULY 21, 1965

Importance of Work of Economic Opportunity Council.

Section 604 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 establishing the Economic Opportunity Council stresses the importance of achieving a coordinated antipoverty effort by all segments of the Federal government. In my opinion, this task must be the principal objective of this Council.

In recent years we have learned beyond question that the war on poverty must be a multi-faceted, many-dimensional effort. For too many years valuable human and material resources were largely wasted by attempting to treat only symptoms of the disease -- by seeking to counteract effects -- by ignoring the more complex and inter-related causes of poverty.

To quote from the President's historic address at Howard University: "It is not a lasting solution to lift just one corner of the blanket. We must stand on all sides and we must raise the entire cover if we are to liberate our fellow citizens."

The agencies sitting on this Council possess the varied resources and expertise required to lift the entire blanket of poverty. We possess the principal weapons which the Federal government must contribute to this struggle: education, health services, housing programs, manpower programs, social services, investment capital, and public works, among others. We also hold the responsibility to see that these weapons are used in a coordinated, effective, and sensible manner.

Each agency recognizes the determination of the President to secure full value for every dollar invested

in the war on poverty, as well as all other Federal programs. This requires objective, hard-headed evaluation of the relative merits of each component of the government's total war against poverty. This requires that no program -- however long established or popular -- be considered as being beyond scrutiny, analysis, and evaluation. This may require some fundamental reordering of priorities as we learn which parts of the total antipoverty program are having the greatest impact on the root causes of poverty.

How is this difficult and complex task to be accomplished? It is my hope that the Economic Opportunity Council will provide a suitable vehicle to carry forward this program of evaluation. Dr. Joseph Kershaw, Assistant Director for Research, Planning, Program and Evaluation, will provide to the Council various data to assist us in this important task. Dr. Kershaw will set forth in

greater detail his program evaluation plans later this morning.

Let me now only emphasize several points which strike me as being especially significant:

1) We still have much to learn about the causes of poverty and the programs able to combat these causes most effectively;

2) We must adjust many of our current notions about relative effectiveness of programs in light of this continuing research and experimentation into the causes of poverty;

3) No program -- Job Corps, MDTA, Aid-to-Dependent Children, vocational education, etc. -- can be considered above this evaluation to determine relative effectiveness in terms of the government's total effort;

4) We must work together cooperatively until the

job is completed -- until we know that the Federal government has mobilized its resources most effectively in this most critical effort.

This will call for true statesmanship on the part of every agency.-- a willingness sometimes to sacrifice short-term and limited self-interest for longer-term and broader considerations.

I am confident we can count on your full cooperation.



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