

CLOSING COMMENT

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In thinking about what has transpired today, I have been struck by the high degree of consensus evident in the discussions by the former secretaries. To be sure, there were different points of view on some issues, but I would like to note six areas of agreement.

First, the secretaries said almost unanimously that collective bargaining is working in this country. Perhaps most of their references were to the private sector and only some to the public sector, but certainly the secretaries believe that collective bargaining is not failing in its objective of getting management and unions to work together to reach agreements. The term that Willard Wirtz used was, once again, "the miracle of collective bargaining."

Second, it was noted that the level of employment or unemployment, particularly among young people and especially among minorities, is of great concern. Willard Wirtz spoke of the problems relating to the measurement of unemployment and the collection of such data. He discussed the need for longitudinal measures and not just periodic measures of unem-

ployment. He also noted the interrelationship between education and manpower policy. Other secretaries discussed our "structural" employment problems but were referring to the same issues. Are training programs effective in a stable or declining region? The regional aspects of the structural employment problem were discussed by John Dunlop. Bill Usery said that we made a commitment to provide a job for everyone who is willing and able to work—that was promised by the Full Employment Act of 1946. But we have not been able to achieve that goal yet.

Third, is the point mentioned by George Shultz in his paper, which, I sense, received agreement from John Dunlop and others: the problem of the mixture of transfer payments and the proposal that a better integration of such programs is needed for low-income workers and the unemployed. George suggested that a "negative income tax" be attached to our tax system. Those things remain on the agenda.

Fourth, John Dunlop mentioned structural differences in collective bargaining. Any one who has read his book on *Industrial Relations Systems* knows how strongly he feels about overgeneralization in discussions of collective bargaining in different industries. He also believes that there needs to be more attention paid to structural change in collective-bargaining arrangements. One example is a need for structural changes in the construction industry. We all know that John has played a major role in this area, and that the secretary of labor may have to take a leadership role to achieve the needed changes in other industries.

Fifth, most of the secretaries spoke of the need for reform of the regulatory process in the Department of Labor. The central preoccupation of a large part of the department's staff is on the development of new regulations. John Dunlop described this process as "unsatisfactory," and his comments seemed to have rung a bell with the others.

Sixth, most of the secretaries seemed to agree that the management problems of the Department of Labor are important. Willard Wirtz, in particular, commented on this in his report in 1969 and again today. He discussed the need to develop management and administrative capabilities in the department. John Dunlop and William Usery also discussed this need.