REMARKS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN AT SANFORD BARN, HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1961

It is heartening to see so many of you here. The fast growth of this movement to help the retarded is one of the inspiring facts I cling to in these troubled times. It gives me hope that humanity, having at last found the right way to cope with this problem, which has baffled mankind through the ages, may also muster the capacity to solve its newest problem: how to avoid destroying itself. The clue to success in both cases, I am sure, is the same - breaking down the barriers that divide us, building up the spirit of brotherhood.

No doubt many of you can recall, as I can, when the retarded child was each family's private - often even its secret - problem. Individually, every parent tried his best to solve the problem. Doctor after doctor was called upon, institution after institution was tried, until at last hope sunk into desperate resignation. There was only one ending to that private, secret road - failure.

It has been little more than a decade that a newer way has been tried on a nationwide scale - the way of cooperation, the way of banding together. Instead of the intermittent pushes of an individual parent against the hard wall of prejudice and apathy, there is now the mighty push of millions.

And the wall is crumbling. Indeed, it has already crumbled. What other area of human endeavor can show so much achievement in such a brief span of time? I can think of none.

The employers who would not consider hiring a retarded person a few years ago find many useful jobs for them now. The scientists who used to think study of mental retardation was a dead end road have discovered it's a superhighway. Classrooms for the retarded are no longer shunned but sought by some of the nation's finest teachers. The friends of parents of retarded children, who merely offered sympathy, now join this Association and give active help. Your influence has even permeated the halls of government - Federal, State and local.

Perhaps, in fact, one of the best ways to gauge the changes you have wrought is in terms of Federal action.

Just six years ago, the total investment of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in programs for the retarded was less than two million dollars. Last year, it was $20 million. This current year, it will be over $26 million. For many years now, whenever the appropriations committee which I chair is considering these programs, the question I ask repeatedly of the agency witnesses is: "Are you asking for enough?" To the best of my ability, I want to make sure that no important progress is being delayed for lack of money. I believe I can tell you with considerable assurance that, as the potentials for progress increase, so will the funds for realizing those potentials.

Translated into action, what has this Federal aid helped communities and States to do for their retarded?

For one thing, it has helped them to increase job opportunities. Last year, vocational rehabilitation agencies placed 2,900 retarded adults in jobs. This is four times as many as were placed in 1956 and a thousand more than were placed in the whole five-year period of 1945-50. At the same time, techniques for fitting the retarded and the job are constantly being studied and improved. Your own association has a grant to study the vocational and social adjustment of persons who leave institutions to take jobs in the outside world. Connecticut College in New London also has a grant and is using it to study the personal, social and economic adjustments of of retarded adults who live out in the community. These are just two of about 50 demonstrations and research projects that are receiving Federal aid through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. And even this is a small part of the total effort which employers, unions, schools and agencies are putting into the problem.

Federal aid has also increased educational opportunities for the retarded. Right now, at Southern Connecticut State College there are two promising students who are getting the training that will qualify them to head programs to prepare more teachers for the retarded. In other colleges and universities throughout the country, there are 160 other students like these two. For the past four years, at the rate of a million dollars a year, the Office of Education has been giving fellowships to these teachers of teachers. This means that the number of well prepared men and women whom school systems like yours can obtain for special classrooms will grow at a geometric rate.

Federal aid has increased treatment opportunities. The diagnostic and evaluation clinic at New Haven is one of 83 such clinics now operating in this country and 55 of them are receiving Federal aid from the Children's Bureau.

The field where Federal aid has most conspicuously changed the prospects for the retarded is research. About 10 million dollars a year is now being spent by the National Institutes of Health on research that holds hope for the retarded. Two institutes conduct and sponsor such research. The National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness is supporting 129 projects right now, two of the major ones being at Yale University. The National Institute of Mental Health has 88 projects, three of them here in Connecticut: one at Yale, one at the University of Connecticut and one at Southbury Training School.

Good research men are at last working on this problem and, as I need hardly remind this group, they are getting results.

The big breakthrough on PKU (phenylketonuria) has opened a whole new vista of glittering possibilities. We may very well find that a rather high proportion of the retarded are the victims of built-in metabolic disorders - like PKU - and that most if not all of them can be corrected by diet.

Similarly, the recent discovery that the body cells of mongoloids have one more chromosone than the cells in normal people has sent researchers hot on the chromosone trail and may lead to answers not only to mongolism but to other abnormalities as well.

I could spend the rest of the evening talking about research because so much is going on in that field. I could talk for hours about the details of the Federal programs I have highlighted. And you, I am sure, could match every one of my stories with equally impressive ones of what your own Association has achieved in local programs.

But rejoicing over gains made is hardly the way to assure that additional gains will be made.

The biggest job ahead, as I see it, and the job which only people like you, individually and collectively, can do, is to see that the benefits of progress are not limited to a few families and their children.

This year, 200 babies will be born with PKU and, in the years ahead, they will have brothers and sisters born with PKU. Not until all babies are routinely checked for PKU can we wipe out this dreadful and now preventable defect.

Right now, in this country, there are more than a million people who have diabetes and don't know it. Some of them are going to have babies this year and some of those babies are going to have brain damage. Here again is a tragedy we could prevent. But it won't be prevented until every community is organized to find its diabetics and to give every diabetic and pre-diabetic pregnant woman the prenatal care that will assure her a normal child.

I have selected these two examples of unfinished business from the hundreds of examples I might have cited for a special reason. I think they point up why this Association has much to gain by joining forces with other health groups in a broader attack on our health problems.

This is a particularly propitious time to make such an effort because the Congress, just this week, passed a law specifically designed to help you. I refer to the Community Health Services and Facilities Act of 1961 - a law which, in my opinion, is one of the most significant pieces of health legislation ever enacted by the Congress.

The purpose of this law is to help communities modernize their basic health structure, a structure that took form 50 to 100 years ago and hasn't changed much since. That structure work fine when acute and contagious diseases were our prime concern, but it doesn't work so well now that long term, chronic conditions are the big health problems.

What kind of a health structure does the modern community need? My friends in the Public Health Service have a phrase for it - comprehensive health care. By that they mean a system of services provided by private medicine, by health departments, by hospitals and voluntary agencies which is so well coordinated that no gaps of neglect are left.

Such a system would assure, first of all, prevention. Just as every baby deserves a PKU check so does he deserve immunization against polio, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus. And when measles vaccine comes along, as I expect it will in a year or so, he deserves that too.

While the list of ills we can prevent is still rather short, there is a much longer list of conditions that can be alleviated if diagnosed early. You well know that the earlier the retarded child is diagnosed the better are his chances for a good adjustment to life. Early diagnosis is just as important for cancer, heart disease and all of today's big killers and cripplers. The modern community health structure is one that assures early diagnosis of all health impairments.

Finally, the modern health structure is one that provides the wide range of special services so many of the handicapped need. I am thinking of visiting nurses; of speech therapists, physical therapists, in fact the whole gamut of special therapists; of dietitians; of homemakers to give a few hours of freedom to those housebound mothers who have patients at home. These and many other types of services would be helpful to all sorts of people who have chronic disabilities, including the retarded.

The new law not only provides grants to States to help get such programs started but also provides project grants. These project grants are available to any enterprising group who want to test out some program that promises to be an important building block in the modern health structure.

Because your Association has demonstrated so dramatically how much can be accomplished by pooling your efforts, I hope you will be among the leaders in this movement to coordinate and strengthen the community's total health effort.

The Federal government, through this new law, makes some useful tools available to you. But, as you know, tools mean nothing unless there are people ready and willing to use them.

I know, personally, that you have some mighty effective tool users here in Connecticut, in fact right in this room. Your State Director, Anne Switzer, distinguished sister of a distinguished lady, Mary Switzer, the head of our Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Bob Williams, your able President -- but I should never have started mentioning names. Quite obviously, from your record, you are all good tool users.

They say that success breeds success and if that is true I haven't a doubt that the bright news, in a world that nowadays seems so full of bad news, will continue to be the story of your progress. Keep on proving, by your example, that when men and women of good will band together, with courage and determination, nothing is impossible.