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Which Goals To Emphasize

How many dollars and how many men would be required to achieve by 1975 all we would like to achieve in urban renewal, better housing, space exploration, health, education, and other national goals?

Several years ago Leonard Lecht* of the National Planning Association analyzed the cost of achieving 16 such national goals by 1975. He concluded that the cost would be \$150 billion more than the gross national product of 1 trillion dollars he expected for 1975. Charles Schultz,† working with more recent data, expects the GNP to reach the trillion-dollar level by 1971 and to be substantially higher in 1975. He also expects substantial surpluses in the federal budget by that time unless taxes are cut. We may not be able to do all we would like in the next half-dozen years, but there will be money enough to do much.

Lecht‡ has now calculated the number of workers needed to achieve all 16 national goals. Again his conclusion is that there will not be enough. A labor force of 101 million would be required, 10 million more than can be expected in 1975.

If these projections are reasonably accurate, we can devote large sums to urban renewal, pollution abatement, improved education, better health, space, defense, and other goals, but there will not be enough workers to do everything desirable. In establishing the priorities that will therefore be necessary, there will be two criteria. The intrinsic merits of the various alternatives will of course be considered, but account should also be taken of the kinds of additional jobs each alternative would create and of the segments of the population that would benefit most directly from their creation, for jobs are themselves a goal as well as a means of achieving other goals.

To spend an additional billion dollars a year on housing or to spend that sum on education and health would, in either case, call for an increase in the labor force of about 100,000 workers. But the mix would be very different in the two cases. The housing effort would require 61,000 craftsmen, operatives, and laborers per billion dollars; the health and education goals would require only 16,000 workers in these categories. In contrast, the health and education goals would require 46,000 teachers, doctors, dentists, and other professionals per billion dollars, while the housing effort would call for only 8,000 professionals.

It is no surprise to be told that the mixture of skills necessary to do one job is quite different from that required to do a different job. But the quantification and detail Lecht has provided allow greater precision in projecting the kinds of new jobs each alternative would create. Decisions as to which programs and goals to pursue most vigorously at any particular time are thus given added strength as instruments of social policy.

Unemployment—it is widely known—is highest among young workers and in minority groups. Programs that would most quickly create many new jobs for members of these groups include housing, urban renewal, better transportation, and the improvement of water supplies and other natural resources. Judgments would surely differ among policy makers as to whether these are the goals of highest individual merit, but they are important in their own right and they all have a plus factor in their labor-market implications. Other goals cannot be forgotten, but these are ones to emphasize in the next few years.—DAEL WOLFLE

* L. A. Lecht, *Goals, Priorities, and Dollars* (Free Press, New York, 1966). † C. L. Schultz, "Budget alternatives after Vietnam," in *Agenda for the Nation*, K. Gordon, Ed. (Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1969). ‡ L. A. Lecht, *Manpower Needs for National Goals in the 1970's* (Praeger, New York, 1969).