

SPEECH TO PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY GROUP

TOPEKA, KANSAS

OCTOBER 16, 1980

THANK YOU, DR. MENNINGER. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU HERE TODAY AS WE LAUNCH THE FOURTH YEAR OF WORK IN ASSISTING HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME INTEGRATED INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AREA. I AM HONORED TO JOIN THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND SPECIAL GUESTS IN CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF <sup>MENNINGER</sup> THE FOUNDATION'S PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY PROGRAM.

CHANNELLING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS

NOT ONLY HAS THIS PROGRAM HELPED ONE THOUSAND HANDICAPPED <sup>KANSANS</sup> PERSONS OBTAIN INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT -- IT HAS DEVELOPED A UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS OF OUR SOCIETY. AT A TIME WHEN GOVERNMENT NO LONGER HAS ALL THE ANSWERS OR THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO COPE WITH THE DIVERSITY OF PROBLEMS AND NEEDS WITHIN OUR SOCIETY, THIS KIND OF COOPERATIVE EFFORT DESERVES OUR ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AND CONGRATULATIONS FOR ITS CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS IN HARNESSING THE ENERGIES AND TALENTS OF BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

THE PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY APPROACH IS SYMBOLIZED BY THIS MEETING OF EMPLOYERS, HANDICAPPED WORKERS, AND MEMBERS OF THE REHABILITATION COMMUNITY. OUR PRESENCE HERE TOGETHER TODAY UNDERLINES A STRONG COMMITMENT TO FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF MAINSTREAMING DISABLED INDIVIDUALS. THIS COMBINATION OF INTERESTS IS INVALUABLE IN SURMOUNTING THE TREMENDOUS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS CONFRONTED BY A DISABLED PERSON WHO CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EMPLOYMENT WORLD, AS WELL AS ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE THAT MOST OF US TAKE FOR GRANTED.

EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON CAPABILITIES

THE PWI APPROACH HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL ONE SIMPLY BECAUSE ITS FOCUS IS ON WHAT HANDICAPPED PERSONS ARE CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR SOCIETY, RATHER THAN ON THE LIMITATIONS WHICH MIGHT PREVENT THEM FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION. FOR YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY LEADERS IN THIS AREA WHO HAVE

EMPHASIZED THE FACT THAT THERE ARE 35 MILLION AMERICANS OUT THERE WHO PROVIDE THE STRENGTH OF A TREMENDOUS NATURAL RESOURCE, IF CHANNELLED IN PRODUCTIVE WAYS. BECAUSE OF PROGRAMS SUCH AS YOURS, ALL AMERICANS ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL THAT DISABLED PERSONS HAVE WITHIN THEIR MEANS.

A HANDICAPPED PERSON IS ONLY DISABLED TO THE EXTENT THAT HE OR SHE IS PREVENTED FROM ACHIEVEMENT. DURING MY LIFETIME, I HAVE PERSONALLY KNOWN MANY DISABLED INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE NOT HANDICAPPED AT ALL -- THEY DID NOT LET A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY KEEP THEM FROM EMPHASIZING THEIR POSITIVE TALENTS. THEY KEPT ON TRYING, AND, BECAUSE THEY HAD THE INWARD MOTIVATION AND SPIRIT, THEY WERE ABLE TO OVERCOME TREMENDOUS OBSTACLES TO THE EXTENT THAT MOST PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY COME IN CONTACT WOULD VIEW THEIR DISABILITIES AS A VIRTUAL ILLUSION. ONE SUCH INDIVIDUAL WHO EXEMPLIFIES THIS KIND OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IS A FELLOW KANSAN, WHO HAS BUILT UP HIS OWN SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS TO ASSIST OTHERS IN THEIR MAINSTREAM PROCESS. I AM REFERRING TO MR. JOHN KEMP, OF KEMP AND YOUNG IN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS.

#### COPING WITH DISABILITY

IT IS DIFFICULT FOR NON-DISABLED PERSONS TO APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PERSPECTIVE THAT WE ARE TRYING TO EMPHASIZE HERE TODAY, SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER HAD THE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO COPE WITH A DISABILITY. WHILE MEDICAL PERSONNEL SEEK TO GIVE THE BEST OF CARE, AND FRIENDS OFFER THE KINDEST OF COMPASSION, THE DISABLED PERSON IS CONSTANTLY ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE TO DETERMINE WHAT HE OR SHE WILL DO WITH THE FUTURE AT HAND.

PWI HAS HELPED MANY PEOPLE PROVIDE A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION. BY INTRODUCING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE REHABILITATION PROCESS, PWI PARTICIPANTS BEGIN TO SEE THEMSELVES AS COMPETITIVE PEOPLE WITH INDEPENDENT FUTURES INSTEAD OF IMPAIRED PEOPLE WHO WILL REMAIN DEPENDENT UPON OTHERS FOR SUPPORT.



### CHANGING EMPLOYER ATTITUDES

IN THE COURSE OF ITS WORK, THE PWI PARTNERSHIP HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE INPUT INTO CHANGING THE ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYERS, WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED FIRST-HAND EVIDENCE THAT IT DOES NOT TAKE A LOT OF ACCOMODATION TO BRING ON BOARD A PRODUCTIVE HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUAL. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY OF YOU HAVE REMOVED ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS FROM YOUR FACILITIES TO MAKE THEM ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL HANDICAPS. SOME OF YOU EVEN OPERATE PWI TRAINING PROGRAMS WITHIN YOUR PLACES OF BUSINESS. AND, ALL OF YOU HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN HIRING AND PROMOTING QUALIFIED DISABLED WORKERS.

### RADIATION EFFECT OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES

NOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL IN TAKING ON AND ACCOMMODATING HANDICAPPED WORKERS IN YOUR BUSINESSES, WE HAVE TO SPREAD THE WORD THAT PWI IS A WORTHWHILE PROGRAM THAT PRODUCES POSITIVE RESULTS. AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE ARE FOCUSING OUR ATTENTION ON ENERGY, PRODUCTIVITY AND INFLATION, WE MUST REMEMBER THE ROLE PWI CAN PLAY IN HELPING TO SOLVE THESE NATIONAL PROBLEMS. WE IN KANSAS HAVE SEEN PWI HARNESS THE ENERGY AND TALENTS OF ONE THOUSAND DISABLED KANSANS TO WORK AT COMPETITIVE JOBS. THIS PROCESS HAS LED TO AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY FOR OUR CITIZENS, WHILE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL GOODS AND SERVICES WITHIN OUR ECONOMY -- NOT TO MENTION A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN BOTH WELFARE AND MEDICAL COSTS.

### ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE AND TAXPAYER STATUS

ALONG WITH THE INDEPENDENCE AND SELF RESPECT GAINED THROUGH HOLDING DOWN A DECENT JOB, A HANDICAPPED WORKER IS ALSO CONVERTED SUCCESSFULLY FROM A TAX-USER TO A TAXPAYER THROUGH PROGRAMS SUCH AS PWI. LAST YEAR, THE NINETY SMALL PWI PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY MADE 5,500 CONVERTS FROM WELFARE DEPENDENCE TO REGULAR EMPLOYMENT. THIS YEAR, THESE HANDICAPPED WORKERS

WILL EARN APPROXIMATELY \$50 MILLION IN WAGES. THE TAXES ON THESE EARNINGS ALONE AMOUNT TO MORE THAN TWICE THE GOVERNMENT'S ENTIRE INVESTMENT IN THE PWI PROGRAM. I KNOW OF FEW OTHER PROGRAMS THAT HAVE ACHIEVED THIS RATE OF RETURN ON THE TAXPAYER'S INVESTMENT. THIS IS A LITTLE-KNOWN FACT THAT WE SHOULD BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO EFFECTIVELY MAINSTREAM OUR NATION'S DISABLED PEOPLE.

#### WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

NOW, WE MUST EXTEND THE BENEFITS OF A PWI PARTNERSHIP TO MORE OF THE NATION'S 35 MILLION DISABLED CITIZENS. DESPITE THE SUCCESS OF PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY, OVER ELEVEN MILLION OF THESE PERSONS ARE UNEMPLOYED AND WANT TO WORK. WE MUST REWARD PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP IN EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED THROUGH ADDITIONAL TAX INCENTIVES SUCH AS THOSE AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEIR WORK SITES MORE ACCESSIBLE TO HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS.

#### TAX INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS

IN MY WORK AS RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE, I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS WHO WISH TO HIRE DISABLED EMPLOYEES. IN 1979, I INTRODUCED LEGISLATION, S.1694, WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE PERMANENT THE DEDUCTION FOR ELIMINATING ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS TO THE HANDICAPPED, AND TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THIS DEDUCTION FROM \$25,000 TO \$100,000. I CONTINUE TO FAVOR MAKING THE DEDUCTION PERMANENT AND EVEN INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF THIS DEDUCTION, BUT IT BECAME APPARENT DURING THE LAST SESSION OF CONGRESS THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE TIME TO ACHIEVE BOTH OF THESE OBJECTIVES DURING THIS SESSION. CONSEQUENTLY, I SUPPORTED AN AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5224, A TAX SIMPLIFICATION AND EXTENSION, WHICH CONTINUES THE PRESENT DEDUCTION FOR REMOVING ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS THROUGH DECEMBER 1, 1982. H.R. 5224 WAS SIGNED INTO LAW BY THE PRESIDENT ON DECEMBER 29, 1979.



### INADEQUACY OF 1976 TAX PROVISION

IN ALL TRUTHFULNESS, I WILL ADMIT THAT I HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE 1976 TAX PROVISION. IN MANY WAYS, RESPONSE TO IT HAS BEEN MORE LIMITED THAN ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED. REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, ~~THOUGH~~, THE \$25,000 LIMITATION IS QUITE LOW. WITH INFLATION, THE HIGH COST OF LABOR, AND THE EVER-INCREASING COST OF CONSTRUCTION, IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION FOR UNDER \$25,000. THUS, THIS INCENTIVE BECOMES LESS ATTRACTIVE IN REALITY THAN IT APPEARS ON PAPER.

### ARCHITECTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

UNDOUBTEDLY THE DISABLED FACE MANY PROBLEMS WITHIN OUR SOCIETY. HOWEVER, ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING -- AND CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MOST NEEDLESS -- IS THAT WHICH THEY INCUR BECAUSE OF INACCESSIBLE DESIGN. EVEN THE BUILDING IN WHICH MY TOPEKA OFFICE IS LOCATED IS STILL NOT COMPLETELY BARRIER-FREE.

### BARRIER-FREE PATH TO EMPLOYMENT

SINCE 1976, I BELIEVE THAT DISABLED PERSONS HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS. ALTHOUGH THE PUBLIC HAS BECOME MORE SENSITIVE TO THEIR NEEDS AND TO FEDERAL LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO PROTECT THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS, THIS CERTAINLY DOES NOT INDICATE THAT WORK IN THIS AREA SHOULD END. REGARDLESS OF HOW MUCH WE GAIN IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, ALL ACHIEVEMENTS PROVE TO BE SOMEWHAT LIMITED UNTIL DISABLED PERSONS ARE ALLOWED TO MOVE FREELY ON SIDE-WALKS, IN OUR BUILDINGS AND ON OUR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.

IN MANY WAYS THE PROBLEM OF ACCESSIBILITY IS ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING WHICH FACES DISABLED PERSONS. WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS WITH THE PROVISION IN THE TAX LAW, BUT I HOPE WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD BY EXTENDING AND EXPANDING IT.

## WORK INCENTIVES AND THE PURITAN IDEAL

IT IS IRONIC THAT, IN A NATION IN WHICH THE WORK ETHIC IS SO VITAL, WE HAVE CREATED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WHICH MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO CHOOSE WORK OVER ENFORCED IDLENESS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE CASE OF THE HANDICAPPED. HOWEVER, SOCIETY IS FINALLY BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE OPTIONS TO A LIFE OF CONFINEMENT FOR DISABLED INDIVIDUALS AND THAT, WITH A LITTLE IMAGINATION AND CREATIVE THOUGHT, HANDICAPPED PERSONS CAN LEAD ACTIVE LIVES AND FIND EMPLOYMENT SUITABLE TO THEIR SKILLS.

UNDER CURRENT LAW, THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS. ONE MUST BE EITHER COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON PUBLIC WELFARE OR TOTALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT. THERE IS VERY LITTLE RECOGNITION THAT A HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUAL CAN HAVE SEVERE DISABILITIES, HIGH MONTHLY MEDICAL BILLS AND ATTENDANT CARE EXPENSES, YET STILL HAVE WORK POTENTIAL. UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR MANY DISABLED PERSONS TO HOLD LOW-PAYING JOBS AND FINANCE THEIR HEAVY MEDICAL EXPENSES AT THE SAME TIME. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT A HANDICAPPED WORKER ENTERING THE LABOR FORCE FOR THE FIRST TIME CAN GAIN AN ENTRY LEVEL POSITION AT A SALARY HIGH ENOUGH TO COVER HIS ATTENDANT CARE AND MEDICAL EXPENSES. IT IS FEASIBLE; THOUGH, THAT THIS SAME PERSON COULD EVENTUALLY BE PROMOTED INTO A POSITION WHERE THE SALARY WOULD COVER THESE EXPENSES -- BUT, IT MUST BE DONE ONE STEP AT A TIME, AND THIS REQUIRES GREAT PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE.

UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE NOT GIVEN THE HANDICAPPED ACCESS TO THE FIRST STEP, BUT, WITH THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 3236, WE ARE DOING JUST THAT. THIS BILL MEETS THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SEVERE MEDICAL DISABILITIES BUT WHO ARE STILL ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT.

## REMOVING WORK DISINCENTIVES

DURING THIS LAST SESSION OF CONGRESS, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN AMENDING THE PUBLIC SOCIAL SECURITY ACT TO PROVIDE SOME POSITIVE INCENTIVES FOR DISABLED PERSONS TO RETURN TO WORK WHICH WILL ALLOW INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE



DISABILITIES TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE CASH, HEALTH BENEFITS, AND SOCIAL SERVICES WHILE WORKING AT LOW WAGES AND MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO RETURN TO THE DISABILITY ROLLS IF A JOB ATTEMPT FAILS. ACTUALLY, THESE PROVISIONS ARE MORE THAN INCENTIVES -- THEY ARE THE SAFETY NET THAT THE HANDICAPPED NEED TO GIVE THEM THE COURAGE AND THE ABILITY TO TRY TO WORK.

AS YOU KNOW, THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY AMENDMENTS OF 1980, TO PROVIDE BETTER WORK INCENTIVES AND IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DISABILITY PROGRAMS UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, BECAME LAW ON JUNE 9TH OF THIS YEAR. MOST OF THE WORK INCENTIVE PROVISIONS BECAME EFFECTIVE ON DECEMBER 1ST, AND REGULATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VARIOUS PROVISIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING WRITTEN AND ARE EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE ON SCHEDULE. OBVIOUSLY, UNTIL THE INCENTIVES ARE ACTUALLY IN PLACE AND HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO WORK, WE WILL NOT KNOW HOW INDIVIDUALS WILL REACT TO THEM. I AM, HOWEVER, CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY IMPETUS TO BRING MANY MORE DISABLED PEOPLE INTO THE WORK FORCE AND HELP THEM BECOME PRODUCTIVE AND SELF-RELIANT.

#### SPECIFIC INCENTIVES

A NUMBER OF PROVISIONS IN THIS LEGISLATION WILL ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE CASH, HEALTH BENEFITS, AND SOCIAL SERVICES WHILE WORKING AT LOW WAGES, AT THE SAME TIME PROTECTING AND FACILITATING THEIR REENTITLEMENT TO BENEFITS IF AN ATTEMPTED WORK EFFORT DOES NOT PROVE SUCCESSFUL. AMONG THESE PROVISIONS IS THE ELIMINATION OF THE 24-MONTH WAITING PERIOD FOR MEDICARE BENEFITS FOR THOSE WHO AGAIN BECOME DISABLED. ALSO, THERE IS AN EXTENSION OF MEDICARE COVERAGE FOR AN ADDITIONAL 36 MONTHS AFTER CASH BENEFITS CEASE FOR A WORKER WHO IS ENGAGING IN SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY, BUT HAS NOT MEDICALLY RECOVERED. IN ADDITION, A PROVISION WAS INCORPORATED GRANTING SPECIAL CASH BENEFITS, MEDICAID AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO LOSE ELIGIBILITY FOR REGULAR SSI BENEFITS WHEN THEIR EARNINGS EXCEED THE \$300 MONTHLY SGA LEVEL. ANOTHER USEFUL STEP IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PILOT PROGRAM TO HELP STATES PROVIDE MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO CERTAIN SEVERELY HANDICAPPED PERSONS WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR DI OR SII CASH BENEFITS. FURTHER, THERE IS AUTHORI-



ZATION FOR A DEDUCTION OF IMPAIRMENT-RELATED WORK EXPENSES FOR PURPOSES OF DETERMINING IF A PERSON RECEIVING SSI OR DI IS ENGAGING IN SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY, AS WELL AS AUTOMATIC REENTITLEMENT TO DI AND SSI BENEFITS DURING A 24-MONTH TRIAL WORK PERIOD IF THE WORK ATTEMPT FAILS. WE ALSO IMPROVED THE EARNINGS DISREGARD FOR EMPLOYMENT IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS.

A NUMBER OF THESE INCENTIVE PROVISIONS WERE TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM A BILL WHICH I DEVELOPED OVER TWO YEARS WHICH WAS INTRODUCED AS S.591 IN 1979. I WAS VERY PLEASED THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ACCEPTED THE PROVISIONS OF MY BILL, BECAUSE I BELIEVE THEY WERE VERY CAREFULLY DRAWN TO ASSURE THAT THE SEVERELY DISABLED ARE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITHOUT EXPANDING DISABILITY BENEFITS TO THE marginally disabled. A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE IS THE SPECIAL BENEFIT STATUS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED WHO WOULD OTHERWISE LOSE CASH SSI BENEFITS AS WELL AS MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

#### POLICY CHANGES BENEFIT ENTIRE SOCIETY

THESE POLICY CHANGES PROMOTED BY PWI AND OTHER ADVOCATES NOT ONLY BENEFIT THE DISABLED BUT **ARE** OF HELP TO OUR ENTIRE ECONOMY. LAST YEAR, DISABILITY RECIPIENTS IN KANSAS RECEIVED \$109 MILLION DOLLARS. THIS REPRESENTS A THIRTY PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR. NATIONALLY, WE PAID OUT OVER \$60 BILLION IN DISABILITY DEPENDENCE PROGRAMS IN 1979. WITHOUT MAJOR POLICY CHANGES SUCH AS THOSE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE HANDICAPPED WORKERS TO OBTAIN COMPETITIVE JOBS, WE RUN THE RISK OF BANKRUPTING OUR ENTIRE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

#### PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES PROVIDE HOPE FOR FUTURE RIGHTS

THE BEST HOPE FOR EXTENDING CIVIL RIGHTS SPECIFICALLY TO HANDICAPPED PERSONS IS TO CONTINUE THE KIND OF WORK THAT PWI IS DOING. BY ENCOURAGING POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYING HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS, EMPLOYERS THEMSELVES CAN TESTIFY AS TO THE MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCOMMODATION NECESSARY TO BRING A DISABLED PERSON INTO THE WORK FORCE. DIRECT EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST WAY TO DISSIPATE THE HANG-UPS AND MISCONCEPTIONS SURROUNDING EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED.



PROGRAMS SUCH AS PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY DO MUCH TO REINFORCE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF EMPLOYING HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS. AN ITT PERFORMANCE SURVEY REVEALS THAT DISABLED EMPLOYEES SHOW HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND HAVE FEWER ACCIDENTS AND LESS ABSENTEEISM THAN OTHER EMPLOYEES. BECAUSE IT IS SUCH A PRECIOUS RIGHT FOR THEM TO BE ABLE TO WORK, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DISABLED INDIVIDUALS PROVE TO BE EXTREMELY PRODUCTIVE WORKERS -- JUST HAVING A JOB MEANS SO MUCH TO THEM THAT THEY TEND TO PUT MORE EFFORT INTO IT THAN MOST NON-DISABLED PERSONS WOULD BE INCLINED TO DO. AS ONE DISABLED WORKER COMMENTED, "IT MEANT MY WHOLE LIFE TO GET THIS JOB."

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF PROGRAMS SUCH AS YOURS, THE AMERICAN BUSINESS WORLD IS BEGINNING TO SEE THAT DISABILITY IS MERELY A LABEL THAT OFTEN ~~ABSCURES~~ INDIVIDUAL TALENTS AND POTENTIAL. BECAUSE OF THE WORK THAT YOU ARE DOING, MANY DOORS WILL BE OPENED TO HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS AS THOSE AROUND THEM BECOME OPEN TO THEIR POSSIBILITIES.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

I AM PROUD TO BE A PART OF THE SUCCESS OF PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY. THREE YEARS AGO, I JOINED PWI PIONEERS JOE GREVE, NANCY BELOHLAVEK AND HERB MOSHER IN HELPING TO ORGANIZE THE COUNTRY'S FIRST WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS. AT THAT TIME, PWI WAS IN ITS BEGINNING STAGES WITH GREAT HOPES FOR ITS FUTURE EFFECTIVENESS. SINCE THAT TIME, IT HAS ACCOMPLISHED MUCH AND IS APPLYING WHAT IT HAS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF DISABLED PERSONS WHO SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN THE WORKING WORLD. AT THE TIME IT WAS FOUNDED, WE PROMISED TO BUILD A PROGRAM THAT WOULD PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR DISABLED CITIZENS THROUGH A NEW FORM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS. WE CONCEIVED OF THIS PROGRAM AS CUTTING ACROSS THE BOUNDARIES OF SPECIFIC DISABILITIES. IT WOULD INCLUDE ALL MINORITIES AND BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES. IT WOULD STRIVE TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES IN THIS AREA.



WORKING TOGETHER, YOU HAVE KEPT OUR PROMISE. AS WE APPROACH THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS, I CAN CITE NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF AN AMERICAN IDEAL OF OPPORTUNITY PUT INTO PRACTICE THAN THE MENNINGER FOUNDATION'S PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY PROGRAM. IT IS LIVING TESTIMONY TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT HANDICAPPED PERSONS CAN MAKE TO THEIR SOCIETY, WHEN THE DOORS ARE OPENED TO THEM.