

RAHALL *Report*

THE CLOSING OF EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

by Congressman Nick J. Rahall

1981 brought many many dramatic changes in the way our government operates. Major reductions were made in nearly every Federal program, except defense, and the impact of these cut-backs are just now beginning to be felt by the American people. In West Virginia, a victim of the Administration's budget ax has been the Department of Employment Security.

As the unemployment rate in West Virginia, and in America, hovers near the 10 percent figure, countless job service employees in our State--about 100; 15,000 nationwide--are being put out of work themselves due to President Reagan's desire to balance the budget. Evidently, little consideration has been given to the fact that each one percentage point rise in unemployment adds \$26 BILLION to the Federal deficit!

During the first week of this year, one million additional Americans joined the ranks of the jobless and applied for unemployment compensation. This was the largest numerical increase for any week since the program began, and has prompted the President to ask Congress to provide \$1.1 billion in additional funds to make unemployment insurance payments.

In West Virginia, and in other states as well, there is a sad irony that people are going from assisting the unemployed--to being the unemployed.

As far as I am concerned, it is far better, and far cheaper, to get unemployed Americans back onto productive payrolls than just them languishing in the unemployment rolls, drawing unemployment benefits.

I did not support the efforts advanced by the Administration to reduce the funding levels in areas that I call, "People Programs". The Department of Employment Security in West Virginia is a "People Program", and I feel it is unfair that such a worthwhile operation should bear an unequitable burden in this so-called economic recovery effort.

For this reason, I have been in contact with my colleagues, who chair the appropriate committees in Congress to deal with this situation. Therefore, since a request has been made for additional funds for unemployment insurance, I think an extra amount should be provided to reopen many of the closed job service offices in West Virginia and throughout America.