

achieving other goals. There is no reason, for example, to continue to act as if any fundamental national interest dictates that we put an astronaut on the moon by 1970. No citizen will suffer if it takes a few years longer; but many Americans can be helped to greater hope, health and material well-being if by stretching out the space and highway programs we mobilize more funds for getting on with the work of building the Great Society.

Those funds should be concentrated on the heart of the problem, which is the existence of 32.7 million poor people in this most affluent of nations, a scandal and tragedy which, as the Economic Report so rightly says, indirectly afflict every American.

To put an end to poverty, three operations are absolutely essential:

- (1) We must create jobs for all who can work;
- (2) We must lift the minimum wage to higher levels for those who work at wages that keep them poor;
- (3) We must provide adequate incomes for those who can't work.

We have dealt with the problem of creating job opportunities elsewhere in this statement.

To help those who work but remain poor, we must lift the minimum wage higher faster. To do that, we must first have taken to heart these words that appeared in the Social Security Bulletin for January 1965:

"That a man risks poverty for his family when he does not or cannot work all the time might be expected, but to end the year with so inadequate an income, even when he has worked all week every week, must make his efforts seem hopeless."

And we must reckon with the fact that in 1964 there were 2,100,000 heads of family, with 6,060,000 children, living in poverty despite the fact that the head of family was employed the whole year; and that 570,000 single persons were in the same predicament.

The working poor—farm workers are a notable example—need more, however, than a higher minimum wage. They need the benefits of collective bargaining and such forms of economic protection as workmen's and unemployment compensation.

For those who are poor because they or the head of their household cannot work, we must provide adequate incomes. We should begin by improving public assistance along the lines recommended by the President in his Economic Report, by requiring that each state's payments at least meet its own definition of need, and that the definition evolve with changing conditions. And we strongly support the President's request that Congress put an end to the 100 percent tax on the earnings of those on public assistance in order that they will have an incentive to accept part-time work; for as the Council says, the poor cannot be expected to work without pay, any more than can the rich.

We should be moving more rapidly toward some form of a national guaranteed minimum income, to which every American would be entitled as a matter of right and human dignity, out of the vast wealth and constantly expanding productive capacity of this nation. Such a guaranteed income is essential to meet the basic needs of those who cannot work. And the Federal government, as we have indicated elsewhere in this statement, should also act as employer of last resort for those who are unable to find jobs in the regular labor market. Pending establishment of such a program, we need a national general assistance plan covering all those in need. We support the President's initiative in forming a commission to study the various minimum income proposals; but we earnestly hope that the study will not take as long as the two years now contemplated, and that prompt action will be taken to set up a guaranteed minimum income program as soon as the study commission reports. With the advent of the guaranteed minimum, Americans would have three compatible forms or layers of income, and those who worked would have all three: the minimum; wage-related Social Security programs (which need just improvement); and other benefits, in addition to wages, derived through collective bargaining.

We must recognize that there is a serious lag in this country between our announcements of good works intended and their realization; and that great social and economic dangers breed in the interval between our democratic professions and our performance.

The last few years have been years of great beginnings under the leadership of President Johnson. He has clearly set forth the goals of the Great Society, and he has taken the initial steps to move the nation toward the achievement