

or fewer family members. It would cost the Federal government about \$20 billion a year to insure every family an income at this level. This is a tiny amount when measured against our gross national product, our present Federal budgetary provisions and the enormous social and economic costs of the poverty problem in this country.

We call attention to the fact that the more popularly known Federal "poverty line" of \$3,335 for a family of four describes a level below which everyone is desperately poor and not meant to delineate between poor and non-poor. Furthermore, the food budget upon which it is based was not regarded by its architects as one which would allow people enough food for good health. Our present welfare system does not normally grant recipients even this meager subsistence. The average income for an AFDC family of four in the United States is less than \$2,000 per year.*

Moreover, not only are welfare payments totally inadequate for minimum subsistence, but three out of four of those below even the Federally defined "poverty line" receive no public assistance whatsoever. Our research has shown that many of these people are eligible for public assistance but either have not been told of their entitlements, or have been arbitrarily and illegally denied assistance when they applied. Many more people, particularly in the southern and midwestern states, are denied welfare by the maze of eligibility barriers many of which are un-constitutional, established for the sole purpose of reducing the costs of the program by denying aid to otherwise needy persons. The best known of these are residence laws, substitute parent ("man-in-the-house") rules and employable parent rules. Most of these rules are presently being tested in the courts and though court victories are producing clear entitlements for thousands of additional persons, the tangled maze of requirements and conditions even in the more "liberal" states, impose restrictions that prevent welfare from being a viable system for providing a minimum income. A few additional facts should be cited here:

1. Thirty-three States do not even pay their own definition of minimum needs in AFDC cases even though their definition of needs is almost always below the so-called "poverty line."
2. Less than half the States extend assistance to two parent families (AFDC-UP program).
3. The last fifteen years personal income in the U.S. has more than doubled, yet payments for families with dependent children have increased only 25% during that period.
4. Total public assistance expenditures have actually decreased over the past fifteen years when this is measured as percentage total personal income or percentage gross national product.
5. Welfare is the largest program of direct Federal aid to the residents of the ghettos and barrios of our Nation. About a quarter to one-third of all ghetto residents receive welfare in any given year and the majority are touched by it in one way or another.

THE ANTI-WELFARE LAW

As if the horrors of our present welfare system were not enough, Wilbur Mills and the House Ways and Means Committee foisted upon the Congress and the country a new set of welfare regulations representing a 300 year leap backwards towards the Dark Ages.

This law, written behind closed doors and without benefit of public hearings on any of its punitive features would:

1. Freeze Federal welfare funds to children with absent parents at the January 1, 1968 level. This measure absolutely denies Federal aid to millions of needy children.
2. Forces mothers to leave their children to accept work or training programs or be cut off from welfare and have her family responsibility taken away from her and possibly even her children removed from her home.
3. Instead of requiring the un-employed parent program to be extended to all states, it seriously restricts it by adding new eligibility conditions which would penalize most those with large families and long-term unemployed.
4. Add substantially to the already tangled maze of rules and requirements

*For more details, see booklet, *Welfare Guaranteed Poverty*; Hearings, vol. II, app. 6.