

the poor. Many of those in need are not covered by any of these programs. In most states, payments even for those covered are inadequate, often grossly so. Recipients commonly lose most or all of any supplementary income they may earn. They are subjected to humiliating tests, which in some cases place a premium on family disruption."

The above was written, incidentally, prior to the passage by the Congress in 1967 of further punitive amendments to the social security laws—amendments which make a bad system even worse.

The ultimate flaw in our present maze of welfare laws and categorical programs is that none of it is designed to eliminate poverty; but rather to perpetuate it. This is not to say that welfare programs have done no good. Doubtless they have kept a good many poor people from starving or freezing to death. The tragedy is that at the same time the system has been geared, by design, to such low levels of benefits that it has perpetuated the clients' poverty with all the accompanying frustration, hopelessness and despair.

We believe the time has come for this nation to find a better answer to the problem of hard-core poverty than the present patchwork of welfare. We believe some form of guaranteed income can provide such an answer.

A third consideration which underlies our support of guaranteed income has to do with a very fundamental appraisal of our present socio-economic order which so largely ties income to work and so highly prizes remunerative employment as the principal means of establishing human identity and worth.

We recognize the ambiguity of the evidence regarding the probable impact of automation on the nature and availability of employment. Although it is clear that in the short run the abundance of human needs and desires is sufficient to provide work in productive and/or service industries for all who can be trained, qualified and motivated to work, the longer run picture in this regard is more uncertain. Whatever the future may hold in respect to the availability of jobs, it is our opinion that a society of abundance should begin early to search for ways of making human life meaningful and human dignity assured which are not so tied as in former scarcity times to jobs and toil and paychecks. We believe that those who are charged with exploring the possibilities of guaranteed income should have such considerations in mind as they pursue their assignment.

This is not to say that we regard the guaranteed income as a panacea for all the socio-economic problems of families or of the nation, or as a substitute for programs of human resource development and full employment. On the contrary, our basic policy statement says: "... a greatly expanded program for providing meaningful jobs could bring many of the poor above the poverty line and greatly enrich our entire society. Such a program is urgent, both because productive activity enhances human dignity and because there are myriads of tasks that need to be done."

The point we are trying to make is that the value system which we have inherited from the era of scarcity puts an evaluation on the role of work, defined as compensated employment, which may prove inappropriate for the era of abundance into which we are now moving. We suggest that a guaranteed income, properly designed, may contribute significantly to the re-evaluation of the nature and meaning and significance of work in the transitional days which lie ahead.

In the meantime, we have faced, as every responsible discussion of the guaranteed income concept must face, the issue of the effect of such a plan on incentives to work. We are simply not prepared to buy the notion that minimum level income guarantees will seriously undercut work incentives. Some of the hardest working people we know have plenty of money and security. One of the most inhibiting factors to work incentive, on the other hand, is malnutrition and the frustrations associated with hard-core poverty. Furthermore, one can hardly conceive a system better designed to produce dis-incentive to work than those present welfare programs which tax all earned income at the rate of 100% by taking away from welfare grants dollar-for-dollar all that the client earns.

Our conclusions on the issue of incentive are summarized in the policy statement as follows:

"The charge is often made that a policy of guaranteeing family income would destroy the incentive to work. As noted above, for many of the poor, employment is not a solution. Nevertheless we recognize that motivation must carefully be taken into account by any plan for assurance of income. Many proposed income assurance plans are designed to encourage the earning of additional income, rather than discourage it as some present programs do. Furthermore, motivational research is revealing various sources for incentives besides the economic, such as