

I think if you had a children's allowance system which departs radically from the other programs in that you do not have to be insured to get it, you do not have to prove need to get it, you get it because you are a child—we should begin to accustom the American people to the idea that it is indeed an efficient and economical way of getting money payments into families, and that we can use the tax system to recoup as much as we want from the people whom we do not, so to say, want to help. I think this would accustom people to the idea because, as I said to you earlier, my own feeling is for the long run—if you ask me what is my longrun objective, it is not all this fussing around with negative income taxes and declarations before and throughout the year, and so on. I think the better way would be to say how much we think people should have and pay it to them regardless of income; maybe we want to begin modestly; but give people a right, a payment, and then have an end-of-year reckoning through the income tax.

As I said earlier, Canada and other countries do this for their aged. I would like to see us begin with children, because they are the neglected group.

So I do not think this would put off more adequate alternative systems of a universal guarantee in the end for everyone.

Senator PROXMIRE. You and Mr. Dumpson have made a very eloquent appeal for children's allowance, but I think what we need is some specifics on it. I understand the 62 countries that Mr. Dumpson referred to in his statement that have it, in most countries, it is grossly inadequate, pitifully inadequate.

Mrs. BURNS. Except in France.

Senator PROXMIRE. Except in France. If we had an adequate, comprehensive children's allowance, how much would that cost?

Mrs. BURNS. I had some figures here just now.

Senator PROXMIRE. You might indicate how much per child it would provide.

Mrs. BURNS. You see, Senator, there are all kinds of children's allowance systems. They differ according to the level. Supposing you said you wanted to pay \$25 a month to each child.

Senator PROXMIRE. You are experts on this. You tell us what you think would be adequate. Is \$25 per month per child adequate? It does not sound like it.

Mrs. BURNS. No, let us take the figure we were talking about, \$50 per month per child. This is a rough estimate, because you probably would want to pay less as the number of children in a family increases.

Senator PROXMIRE. That sounds like the income tax exemption, which is \$50 a month, \$600 a year.

Senator PROXMIRE. What would be an adequate amount?

Mrs. BURNS. We took for the purpose of argument, say, \$50 per month per child. That would cost, by the time you have removed the exemption, which we think you should do at the same time, and by the time you have taxed the allowance, you could reduce the cost to about \$28 billion.

Senator PROXMIRE. You say you remove the exemption. In other words, if you had an adequate income and you had children, you would get no exemption on your income tax for your children?