

The right to have a share of earthly goods for one's self and one's family belongs to everyone.

How else do you say "entitlement"? There is no other way.

Returning to our question—Who must deliver the goods to the entitled persons? Neighbor citizens formally organized in a government offer the only practicable and therefore proper resource. It is here that commutative justice—one to one—transfers individual obligations to distributive justice for delivery of entitlement by a nation for all. The individual and the common good demand this merger in social justice.

We must now ask, how do we move the entitlement theory of distributive justice into daily practice? Obviously this must be by law. City or State laws, however, do not have the overall capabilities to accomplish this and many States would renege for a hundred excuses. In a country, the common good of the whole national family is at stake. Only Federal law can deliver a fair share of his belongings to every man.

As a matter of record, the entitlement concept—for persons qualified under the law for public welfare—is at times explicit and implicit in the Social Security Act; furthermore scattered Federal and State policy releases have tried to apply the entitlement theory. Recently the report of the National Advisory Council of Public Welfare urged that all welfare programs receiving Federal funds be administered consistent with the principle of public welfare as a right.

That's a nice principle. However, unknown, unasserted, unenacted, and unstatutized rights are de facto no rights at all on the kitchen table. The theory of distributive justice will remain an abstraction until translated into statutory right and then to doorstep application.

2. *A second major issue derives from the "work-ethic" of the American culture*

This attitude is expressed in such phases as "if you don't work, you don't eat," and "an idle mind is the devil's workshop." This attitude is inclined to a prejudgment of all persons who do not work as being lazy, indolent, parasitic, and therefore evil. A nonworking person is suspect of not wanting to work, and the burden of proving otherwise rests upon the person. This finds practical expression in the effort to keep public assistance grants at an amount lower than the lowest paying job.

This "work-ethic" attitude springs from the early stages of the industrial revolution and has paralleled the development of our economically oriented culture. It identifies work with an occupation which is materially productive, and assigns to it the highest value. Thus a plantworker and an industrial executive still receive higher remuneration than employees on equivalent levels in other occupations. By way of a quasi-extension of work acceptability, other occupations are assigned a value, such as physicians, lawyers, nurses, teachers, social workers, and politicians. Some of these, such as teachers and social workers, are reluctantly encompassed in the acceptability orbit as evidenced from the fact that their salaries, in spite of their extensive educational background, are often less than the wages of industrial workers.