

Representative GRIFFITHS. Please do.

Representative CURTIS. I think we have to answer a very important economic question before we proceed much further on whether we have a guaranteed annual income or as I propose instead, the guaranteed opportunity to earn an annual income. A crucial question in this issue is whether automation or cybernetics or whatever term one wants use for rapid technological advancement creates more jobs than it destroys. I had the pleasure of being on a panel with Dr. Robert Theobald, who is advocating the guaranteed annual income, Dr. James Tobin of Yale, and Dr. Milton Friedman, all of whom were advancing various refinements of the negative income tax. After we had presented our papers and during the questioning by the audience, I asked this very question—does automation create more jobs than it destroys? Are there more jobs going begging today in our society than there are unemployed?

Now, I argue that the evidence is very clear if we will look at it that we have more jobs going begging than there are unemployed. There is a refinement to this question. Some will go on to say that even if there are more jobs going begging than there are unemployed, automation or cybernetics tends to render economically useless the unskilled and the semi-skilled, because the new jobs created tend to require higher skills and higher proficiencies. Automation they say, thus renders certain people economically obsolete.

Now, many of the guaranteed annual income theorists have made that bald statement, and further allege that this will be increasingly so.

Well, I think it is about time that this not be treated as a dogma, because I happen to think the evidence is to the contrary, but I do not want my conclusions treated as dogma, either. If I thought that it were true that automation was on balance destroying jobs and that there were more unemployed than there were jobs available, or that there was a segment of our people who have been rendered economically obsolete, I would say yes, you have to go to something like a guaranteed income—even the society of Queen Elizabeth's day had the poor laws. Society is going to take care of its disadvantaged, thank God, because of this great humanitarian streak in human beings to take care of people one way or another. The question is how do we do it best?

Now, proceeding from that base, I have been urging that our committee, the Joint Economic Committee, and other committees to get into this business of finding out by studying automation and cybernetics and seeing what the facts are. To my regret, we still do not have the statistical series of jobs available which was required, as I recall under the Manpower Training and Development Act of 1962. We have not kept up our Dictionary of Occupational Titles. It should be looseleaf. Automation is so rapid these days that the very nomenclature of job skills changes radically and rapidly. Skills that used to be in demand are rendered obsolete, new skills are coming in. We need to develop these statistical tools in order to be able to answer this basic question of job creation and job destruction.

I think it is clearly true that the unemployed are not capable of filling the jobs that are going begging, but the problem of capability does not rest in lack of inherited abilities, it rests in their lack of training and education.