

foreword

In March, 1967, as part of the observance of the 100th Anniversary of the New York State Board of Social Welfare, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller invited 100 of the nation's leaders in industry, labor, news media, philanthropic foundations and government to participate in a conference "to help plan new approaches to public welfare in the United States."

Participants from 14 states and from 12 cities within New York State accepted the Governor's invitation and challenge which, essentially was: "If the problem of public welfare was given to you, what would you recommend as sound public policy for the next decade?"

In convening the group, Governor Rockefeller said: "It is largely the private sector of the nation that has historically demonstrated ingenuity and inventiveness, the resources and resourcefulness that made America what it is today."

The Conference was planned to utilize these assets to help find possible new approaches to deal more effectively with the persistence of welfare dependency in a nation of plenty.

It was recognized at the outset that the public welfare laws, and particularly the public assistance portion, were extraordinarily complex, and that few of the Conference participants had had any prior knowledge of, involvement with or responsibility for the subject.

The hope was that creative minds, unencumbered by past involvements, could take a fresh, objective look at the situation as it exists, analyze the available data, assess its strengths and weaknesses, attribute a variety of values to what it found and, where indicated, recommend some other approaches and possible solutions.

To help provide a framework for discussion, three position papers reflecting diverse political, social and economic points of view, as well as supplemental data from governmental and private sources, were sent to all delegates several months before the Conference with a request that, after reviewing and studying the material, they respond in writing to the data sent, or submit views of their own which could be discussed. These responses were collated and sent to all participants prior to the Conference, so delegates had the advantage of a preliminary exchange of views prior to the start of the actual meeting.