

effective Federal standards governing public assistance are in existence. Each state promulgates its own rules and regulations, with the result that the welfare system really comprises 50 different programs.

The range of benefits, payments and practices is extreme. More than 20 states still do not accept all of the Federal funds available to help needy families because of their reluctance or inability to appropriate matching funds.

The result is a "crazy quilt" pattern that discriminates against the poor in many states and imposes a greater burden on more liberal states.

Various commissions have recommended the adoption of uniform national standards for welfare which, in effect, would establish a Federal floor below which no state would be permitted to fall and no person would be expected to live. *The Committee endorses such a step in principle.* A uniform system, possibly adjusted to take into account regional differentials in living costs, would be more effective and efficient than the present system. (One method to implement such a concept is contained in the report of the Advisory Council on Public Welfare entitled, "Having the Power, We Have the Duty," June 1966, which was made available to all Arden House conferees.)

Under such a system, the Federal Government would guarantee the minimum, with the states supplying the overlay, based upon per capita and other considerations. Such a minimum is implicit in the negative income tax.

#### 4. FAMILY PLANNING

There was wide agreement at Arden House that more intensive and effective family planning information should be made as available to families on public assistance as it is to others. An increased effort in this direction is mandated in the new Federal legislation, which appropriated an initial \$15-million for this purpose, and is welcomed by the Steering Committee.

But since family planning must be part of comprehensive social service, these Federal funds are not enough to take care of our population problems despite the decrease in the national birth rate. In some of the slum neighborhoods of the country, the birth rate is higher than those of India and Pakistan. Children born in these areas are often premature, weak, sickly and die before they are a year old.

The evidence presented at Arden House showed clearly that poor families tend to have more children—thus raising family needs without a commensurate increase in family income. Half of the poor children were in families with five or more children.

#### 5. SYSTEMS APPROACH TO POVERTY AND PUBLIC WELFARE

Threaded throughout all of the data submitted to the Arden House conferees was the admission by the professionals and other experts in the field that, in many areas, they were "flying blind;" that there was a