

d. Expansion of Day Care

A large expansion of day care facilities is necessary to enable those mothers with young children to work outside their homes, if they can. The Committee is pleased that the new welfare legislation makes provision for expansion of this hitherto limited program. In welcoming it, the Committee is also cognizant of the fact that not all mothers should work outside their home, and that not all children should be in day care. The expansion, however, is vitally needed and desirable, and the new facilities might, in part, be staffed by trained women on assistance, thereby further reducing the welfare rolls.

The Committee believes that day care should be viewed not as a custodial and baby sitting agency but as an educational and cultural program, and that positive fruits of research in early childhood education should be applied in these facilities so that, in effect, they become early year-round "Head Start" programs.

e. Abolition of "Mandatory Verification"

Evidence that "red tape" strangles efficient operation is great. The Committee believes that given the enormous staff turnover, high cost of administration, poor and uneven quality of social services, that substitution of an "affidavit" system to determine eligibility, rather than requiring individual verification in each case, would be more desirable and, in the long run, promote greater efficiency and even economy. In addition, it is less degrading and demeaning to the applicant. Such a system, with spot checks used in a fashion similar to the Internal Revenue Service, would free staff to spend their time as counsellors and helpers rather than investigators. The public interest would be as well, and possibly better served, if more time were spent helping people on assistance get off the rolls, rather than in investigating them to make certain they should remain on assistance. Experimentation in New York City in two centers has shown a creditably low level of ineligibility using the affidavit approach.

The affidavit system is used to determine eligibility for the medical assistance program in New York State with a random sampling of not more than 5 per cent of the cases selected for investigation and verification. This method has proved successful in determining the eligibility for more than 2½ million persons under this program. Based upon this experience, the New York State Department of Social Services is planning expansion of the method to part or all of the public assistance program throughout New York State.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

By any standard of sound management practice, the administration of the public welfare program is almost hopelessly inefficient. More than 110,000 persons are employed in the public welfare program, of whom more than 80,000 are in the Federally-aided assistance programs. The annual turnover averages close to 30 per cent, with some states in excess