

Dr. Burns made a strong case against the inequities and inadequacies of present policies which, in addition to being complicated to administer, are degrading to the recipient. She felt that any public welfare maintenance system should include:

- Some standard allowance for everyone whose income is below a certain level.
- A social policy which would endeavor to identify certain types of commonly experienced special need for which stated payments could automatically be made.
- Payments meeting the suggested poverty level which could provide a differential in regional cost of living but would eliminate present illogical discrepancies among the states.

In opting for reform, which Dr. Burns did throughout her paper, she raised the question of what service functions public welfare should be responsible for. The answer to this question depended on:

- The extent to which such services could be reduced by assurance of an adequate income.
- The effectiveness and appropriateness of needs to services.
- To the extent that they are needed and effective, should they be operated by public welfare, other public agencies or a single agency?
- Should public assistance payments and social service programs be administered by one department? Or would it be sound to have a separate department whose primary function would be consultation, referral and direct provision of social casework services?

The fact that Government had taken an increasing responsibility for financing public welfare programs aroused a conflict of opinion. These ranged from those who argue that the Federal Government should expand, set a national minimum standard and propose a new method of financing it—to those who contend that the Federal Government is already too influential and interfering.

In her opinion, the future role of the volunteer agency also merited considerable study. She offered the possibility that in the future the private agency might come to concentrate on the provision of services to those to whom the public welfare agency had no responsibility. She also raised the question as to what extent the administration of public welfare programs should be in the hands of social workers for whom social welfare is a profession. Some critics of the present system advocate citizen boards directly involved in administration, particularly at local levels; others a more impersonal bureaucratic expert administration by social workers and trained aides.

For too long, policies have been made on the basis of beliefs about facts rather than on tested knowledge. She pointed out that no forward-looking businessman would be content to operate even a much smaller enterprise while remaining in the dark as to the effectiveness of his policies. More knowledge is needed on the causes of dependency, the nature and behaviour of the dependent population, of motivation and of the effectiveness of various policies.