

continued absence from the house. Alabama does not have a public assistance program which provides aid to children who are deprived of parental support because of the unemployment of a parent. Thus, many needy families which meet the income requirements for public assistance go unaided if the unemployed father remains with the family.

Families who manage to qualify for ADC find that their economic position is not substantially improved. An ADC family of four receives only \$89 a month from the State Department of Pensions and Security despite that Department's determination that such a family needs \$177 a month for basic items such as food, clothing, and household expenses. Only \$40.30 of the ADC payment is available for use for nonshelter items such as food and clothing. Even if a family were able to spend the entire \$40.30 for food monthly, this amount is only 28% of what the U.S. Department of Labor has estimated is needed by a family of four to maintain an adequate diet. In March 1967, the Federal Index of Poverty showed that \$2,320 a year was needed to afford a family of four even the minimal diet that could be expected to provide adequate nutrition and still leave enough to pay for other living essentials. In March 1967, the cash payment to an ADC family of four in Alabama totaled \$876 per year, 37.8 percent of the Federal poverty index. Even if allowance is made for the average value of surplus food and the food stamp bonus received by ADC families participating in those programs, the total payment is still less than half of the Federal index.

Ruben King, the Commissioner of the Alabama State Department of Pensions and Security, conceded to the Commission that the present cash payment, which represents 50% of the need, is inadequate but that the Department had been unable to get the state legislature to appropriate more money for the program. He stated that the average ADC payment in March of 1968 was approximately \$15 per person and commented:

"\$15 is not enough; there are many children in this State, both black and white, who go to bed hungry at night. . . . [S]ince 1964 the whole Federal program of welfare has been one of a rehabilitative approach, yet, if you cannot give children adequate food, if they do not get adequate education, they are not going to be able to compete in society today, and your vicious cycle of welfare will continue. If these people are not able to compete, then society will leave them along the roadside."¹²

The requirements for the receipt of public assistance, which include factors other than need, are so restrictive as to exclude many needy people. Thus, there are a large number of needy people who are unable to receive public assistance who nevertheless are able to participate in food programs in which need is the only requirement.

From October 1, 1966, to September 30, 1967, non-public assistance recipients constituted between 72.5 and 82.5 percent of those receiving surplus food in Macon, Marengo and Monroe Counties, while in January 1968, 76.5 percent of the participants in Butler County and 86.5 percent of the participants in Wilcox County were non-public assistance recipients.

An even smaller proportion of the participants in food stamp programs are public assistance recipients. From October 1, 1966, to September 30, 1967, in Bullock, Dallas, Greene and Hale Counties, the non-public assistance participants represented between 88 and 97 percent of all participants. In Perry County in January 1968, non-public assistance participants represented 72 percent of the total participants.

III. HEALTH

The life of deprivation which the poor lead has a direct and damaging effect on their health. The debilitating effects of an inadequate diet were described to the Commission by Dr. Alan C. Mermann, a Connecticut pediatrician and a member of the Medical Committee on Human Rights, who directed a health survey among Negroes in Lowndes County during the summer of 1966. He examined 709 children and 110 of their parents. Dr. Mermann testified that 80 percent of the children suffered from anemia which was mainly due to bad nutrition. He estimated that these children had "approximately two-thirds of

¹² Mr. King was opposed to the 1967 amendment to the Social Security Act which limits the Federal contribution to state ADC payments to that proportion of the child population of the state which was receiving ADC assistance during the first quarter of 1968. He stated that he thought one of the reasons for the amendment was to put pressure on the states to develop work incentive programs for ADC recipients. He thought that such programs would be successful because "I think that most of the people on welfare resent the fact that they are on welfare and given an opportunity will come off of the welfare."