

SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE PAYMENT OF INCOME SUPPLEMENTS—
INCENTIVES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED

It is important that a policy of underwriting family income should encourage the earning of additional income rather than discourage it as most welfare programs now do. Furthermore, motivational research is revealing various sources for incentives besides the economic, such as prestige, power, and social usefulness. Indeed, access to income may strengthen motivation and liberate creativity.

SOME OTHER EXAMPLES OF INCOME TRANSFER PAYMENTS

The proposed idea of income transfer payments is not at all new in American political life—just the adaption to those in poverty, who need it most. For years farmers have been paid more than a billion dollars a year not to raise food on productive land, and additional millions for price supports and other agricultural benefits. Business gets huge concessions including oil depletion allowances, tariff protection and other considerations. There have been income supplements for airlines and the maritime industry, etc. A negative income tax would be a supplement program based on the need for at least the minimum essentials for a decent life. The cost would be only a fraction of the cost of the Vietnam war, or the current Defense budget.

INCOME SUPPLEMENT NOT A PANACEA FOR ALL THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY

We recognize that a minimum assured income is not a substitute for programs of full employment and human resource development including training for jobs, nor for adequate medical care and services, nor for the provisions of good housing. It is not a panacea for all the social and economic problems encountered by the family and the individual in the course of a full life cycle. There will still have to be provisions for meeting temporary emergencies, and for a variety of social services, but it ought to supplant the present wasteful and degrading welfare system. Since our system works imperfectly, it is, of course the responsibility of society to devise new institutions which will adequately fulfill basic human rights.

RELATION TO WORLD WIDE POVERTY

Eliminating poverty in the United States could be an important forerunner for a world wide attack on poverty. The United States cannot be an island of affluence in a world of misery and poverty. A program of income maintenance could enhance our capacity as a nation to contribute more effectively toward raising the standard of living and attacking the causes of poverty in the rest of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that citizens—

1. Study the various methods of assuring every individual and family a job and income capable of supporting human life in dignity and decency.
2. Participate in the development and implementation of those policies and programs which best fulfill the above criteria.

(The above statement was approved in principle on May 15, 1968, by the Administrative and Policy Committees of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, for guidance of the staff prior to the meeting of the FCNL General Committee.)