

showing since 1947 the percentage of families each year with incomes below half the median, as well as the percentages with incomes below \$3,000 and \$2,000 (in constant 1965 dollars), respectively. The table shows that, between 1947 and 1966, families with less than \$3,000 of 1965 buying power fell from 30 percent of the total to 15.1 percent. *But the proportion of families with less than one-half the median income showed no significant change, fluctuating between 18.9 and 20.9 percent of the total.*

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. FAMILIES CLASSIFIED "POOR" BY CHANGING AND FIXED STANDARDS, 1947-66.  
[In 1965 dollars]

| Year                    | Median income | Percentage of families with income—             |                   |                   |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                         |               | Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the median <sup>1</sup> | Less than \$3,000 | Less than \$2,000 |
| (1)                     | (2)           | (3)                                             | (4)               | (5)               |
| 1947.....               | \$4,275       | 18.9                                            | 30.0              | 17.2              |
| 1948.....               | 4,178         | 19.1                                            | 31.2              | 18.1              |
| 1949.....               | 4,116         | 20.2                                            | 32.3              | 19.5              |
| 1950.....               | 4,351         | 20.0                                            | 29.9              | 18.1              |
| 1951.....               | 4,507         | 18.9                                            | 27.8              | 16.3              |
| 1952.....               | 4,625         | 18.9                                            | 26.3              | 15.8              |
| 1953.....               | 5,002         | 19.8                                            | 24.6              | 15.4              |
| 1954.....               | 4,889         | 20.9                                            | 26.2              | 16.7              |
| 1955.....               | 5,223         | 20.0                                            | 23.6              | 14.6              |
| 1956.....               | 5,561         | 19.6                                            | 21.5              | 13.0              |
| 1957.....               | 5,554         | 19.7                                            | 21.7              | 13.0              |
| 1958.....               | 5,543         | 19.8                                            | 21.8              | 12.8              |
| 1959.....               | 5,856         | 20.0                                            | 20.6              | 12.1              |
| 1960.....               | 5,991         | 20.3                                            | 20.3              | 12.1              |
| 1961.....               | 6,054         | 20.3                                            | 20.1              | 11.9              |
| 1962.....               | 6,220         | 19.8                                            | 18.9              | 10.9              |
| 1963.....               | 6,444         | 19.9                                            | 18.0              | 10.2              |
| 1964.....               | 6,676         | 19.9                                            | 17.1              | 9.2               |
| 1965.....               | 6,882         | 20.0                                            | 16.5              | 9.1               |
| 1966 <sup>2</sup> ..... | 7,231         | 19.2                                            | 15.1              | (*)               |

<sup>1</sup> Estimated by interpolation.

<sup>2</sup> UAW estimates.

<sup>3</sup> Not available.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports series P-60, No. 51, "Income in 1965 of Families and Persons in the United States," January 1967. (From the Public Interest, summer 1967.)

In other words, the proportion of families who are poor because they enjoy less than half the income of the average family is no smaller today than it was 20 years ago, and *in absolute numbers of poor families we are actually losing ground*. In percentage terms, the improvement since we began talking about a war on poverty has been minuscule. In fact, the percentage of poor families has been higher in recent years than in some years of the late forties and early fifties.

It is true that a closer study of family income distribution does show one encouraging sign. There has been some upward movement within the ranks of the poor, for the proportion with incomes between one-quarter and one-half of the median has increased somewhat, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion having less than one-quarter of the median. But we have a long way still to go.

#### SENSE OF URGENCY NEEDED

We know what actions are needed. The present administration and its predecessor have called again and again for them to be done. Unfortunately, they have not always called for as much to be done as