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OUR FUTURE DILEMMA

Advisers' Plan Would Add Billions to Welfare Costs

National Council's 20 Proposals To Expand Relief Could Mean Soaring Taxes

Public welfare is a costly and expanding problem. The current series of articles in The News has focused on existing welfare ills, accomplishments and abuses as seen by Reporter Ed May, who worked as a caseworker for the Erie County Department of Social Welfare.

Proposals advanced in the articles to improve welfare administration and possibly effect long-range tax savings include co-operation of other governmental agencies, increased expenditures for personnel, and in some instances new or amended laws.

In these concluding articles The News offers a look into the burgeoning future of welfare in the United States.

By DICK BURKE

Ever hear of the "Report of the Advisory Council on Public Assistance?"

It's a comparatively unpublicized 137-page paper-bound document available in Washington. It contains 20 recommendations of such magnitude that it could alter the basic structure of welfare administration.

It also could add billions of dollars to welfare costs and it could further entangle the Federal Government in the "wel-

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fare state." It is also a fact that when Government expenditures go up, taxes increase in proportion.

Set Up Early In 1959

And while the corridors of Capitol Hill may yet resound to cries of anguish when the report's full force seeps through Congress, it is interesting that the council itself was created by congressional directive.

The 12-member panel was set up early in 1959 to review, explore and recommend legislation or amendments involving Social Security provisions in public assistance. It was dissolved at the end of the year and its report published in March.

Dean Fred Delli Quadri of the New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, told a professional audience at the University of Buffalo last month that the report and a companion piece on child welfare "have tremendous significance and can have much impact on the future of public welfare in this country."

Council Not Unanimous

The reports marks the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Social Security Act. Members who worked on the report stated:

"We disband, impressed at once with the great progress of the public assistance programs over the past quarter of a century and the serious gaps and inequities that still remain in coverage, in adequacy of public financial assistance and in availability of high quality."

Not all of the 20 recommendations met unanimous assent. Some sparked blunt objection among advisory committee members. One of the proposals, for instance, would set up a National Institute for Strengthening Family Life. Another would shut off federal grants-in-aid to states which impose a residence requirement for welfare recipients.

Aid to Dependent Children

Still another would expand aid to dependent children to a point where it would include any financially needy child — even though the child may be living with able-bodied parents.

Take this latter one, for example, Recommendation 3, entitled: "Extension of aid to dependent children program." Summarized it reads:

"Under the existing provisions for aid to dependent children, federal grants-in-aid are available to the states only for the assistance of children deprived of support or care because of the absence, death or incapacity of one parent.

"Monumental Change"

". . . the program for aid to dependent children should be expanded to include any financially needy children living with any relative in place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home.' "

William R. MacDougall, general counsel and manager, County Supervisors Association of California, and a council member, dissented, calling the recommendation "a monumental change in the concept of aid to dependent children."

He went on to say: "The change suggested here is to inject the program into homes where there are two able-bodied parents who are either unable or unwilling to support their family in the style prescribed by the latest edition of the child aid budget schedules of the state in which they live."

Tobin Files Objection

He also said it is difficult to justify such a change while "continuing the denial of federal assistance to the approximately 100,000 American children who are supported by state and local government funds in approved foster homes and licensed institutions. Those children are orphans and half-orphans in fact."

Objection also was filed by Charles J. Tobin Jr., secretary, New York State Catholic Welfare Committee, Albany. His observation, in part, was:

"The recommendation to expand the category of aid to dependent children would distort further a program which has been the focus of multiple problems in the community in recent years" and he added that the program "was never meant, either in its inception or its continuance, to be the major program whereby the financial needs of families with children would be met in public assistance."

Range the Whole

The 20 recommendations range the whole broad field of public assistance.

Involved is a present "welfare state" slightly under the 7,946,627 residents in 88 counties which make up the State of Ohio. This means that four out of every 100 men, women or children in the nation — more than 7,000,000 — depend on public assistance for some or all of their income.

Erie County's average welfare "population" is 36,301, and the bill for 1959 was $29,926,000.

The national bill involving the 7,000,000 persons in 1958, for example, came to $3,500,000,000. That's 3½ billion taxpayer dollars.

NEXT—The more costly aspects of future welfare.

Members of Report Committee

The 12-member group responsible for the "Report of the Advisory Council on Public Assistance" was headed by William L. Mitchell, commissioner of social security, Department of Health, Education & Welfare. Other members were:

Frank Bane, consultant to the director, Office of Civil Defense Mobilization, Washington.

Harry A. Bullis, former chairman of the board, General Mills Inc., Minneapolis.

John E. Burtin, vice president, Cornell University, Ithaca.

Wilbur J. Cohen, professor of public welfare administration, University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Miss Loula Dunn, director, American Public Welfare Association, Chicago.

Mrs. Katherine Pollak Ellickson, assistant director, Department of Social Security, AFL-CIO, Washington.

Raymond W. Houston, commissioner, New York State Department of Social Welfare, Albany.

Bernard Lander, associate professor of sociology, Hunter College, N. Y., chairman, Commission of Family & Youth Welfare of the Synogogue Council of America.

William R. MacDougall, general chuncil and manager, County Supervisors Association of California, Sacramento, Calif.

William H. Robinson, chairman, Illinois Commission on Public Aid & Assistance, Chicago.

Charles J. Tobin Jr., secretary, New York State Catholic Welfare Committee, Albany.

Rev. William J. Villaume, executive director, Department of Social Welfare, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., New York.