

Alabama Congressman Shocked by HEW's Suggestion No Investigation be Made to Determine Welfare Eligibility

By Representative Bill Dickinson

What would be your thoughts if the bank which held your life savings began a program where anyone could more-or-less say, "I need a loan and I qualify," and receive the money? Most likely you wouldn't want to do business there anymore.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is proposing that it be allowed to do just about the above. It wishes to accept information provided by a welfare applicant as God's truth. Thus, HEW would not investigate to see if the applicant's volunteered responses to questions about his family and finances are true. There would merely be spot checks of ten per cent of the cases, plus the requirement that blind and disabled persons undergo a medical examination.

It is times such as this when I shake my head in disbelief. I cannot imagine a more ridiculous idea. When I realize that it is tax money which HEW spends, I become quite agitated.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, along with other spenders of the taxpayers money, has an obligation to guard these funds against misuse; in other words, against those who are willing to take advantage of America's willingness to help those in need.

HEW wants all fifty states to be required to implement its "declaration of need" proposal July 1st. Federal officials, in order to quiet any public uproar that might develop over the proposed regulations, are trying to draw a parallel between the procedures for checking federal income tax returns and the procedures to be followed in the HEW proposal. These officials say that in both cases a person's statement is accepted as the truth unless fraud is clearly indicated, and in both cases spot checks are run.

But these same officials conveniently do not reveal that in the case of federal income tax returns there is a special set of criminal laws which guard against fraud, and which impose stiff penalties when someone is convicted of defrauding the government. Prosecutors of welfare abuses can only rely on state laws against perjury, and the crime of obtaining money by false pretense. Furthermore, the intensive law enforcement which is available to the Internal Revenue Service would not be available to those who spot check on welfare recipients. The same officials, moreover, don't bother to explain that federal income tax returns are cross checked through the filing of W-2 forms and forms that must be filed by

banks and brokerage firms.

In order to add further credibility to its "declaration of need" proposal the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare cites findings which show fewer than one-half of one per cent of current beneficiaries have committed fraud in obtaining aid and fewer than two per cent of the current beneficiaries of welfare are ineligible. HEW then says that pilot projects have shown that the new proposal won't increase these statistics.

The one difficulty with the figures given by HEW is that they don't agree with an intensive study made of welfare cases in Washington, D. C. showing that over fifty per cent of the welfare recipients were ineligible.

One of the major demands made by the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy during the Poor People's Campaign was the "declaration of need" plan now being proposed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Moreover, The Washington Post reports that this proposal "fulfills a promise made by HEW Secretary Wilber J. Cohen to Abernathy" during the march last spring. "Cohen told Abernathy then that HEW would require states to begin developing the declaration system," the Post continues.

Not a penny should be denied to those who deserve and qualify for assistance. But this last-minute proposal by the outgoing Administration should be carefully examined. I am hesitant to accept HEW's statements. I am not at all positive that a thorough investigation of welfare infractions was made, much less a thorough testing of the new proposals. I am doubtful that the test cases cited can be honestly compared to what would happen in the nation as a whole. In addition, officials of HEW have conceded that the new plan, if implemented, could result in additional applicants to the welfare rolls. This last we must guard against.

The American people have put up with a lot from HEW and its administrators, but I sincerely believe that the American people will not accept anymore foolhardy schemes, and this one seems quite insane.

Social Security

Continued from page 1

eed income derives from their own resources as of any given day on which a trial balance is run.

But the social security program is not a voluntary insurance program that depends on annual sales. To use poker parlance, it has "locks at the board" because everybody who earns a buck up to \$7800 per year has to kick in whether he likes it or not, and so does his boss.

The reserves on hand, if the tax were to be stopped today, are obviously not enough to fund the benefits that presently are guaranteed by law, but the same congress that eliminates the collection of this social security tax will also have to eliminate all payments, and that congress will never be convened.

Recession or Depression?

But what if recession or deep depression were to hit the country and the income of the social security trust funds were to suddenly and drastically drop? This is a valid question, and it has a logical answer. In such a circumstance congress would have to put payment of benefits on parity with the rate of collections. If collections in a year fell

off 50 per cent a 50 per cent cut in benefit checks would be necessary. But the sunny side of this shady consideration is that if this came to pass 50 cents would then have the buying power a dollar had before.

Actually the problem of inflation worries social security officials far more than that of deflation, since the economy and federal policy are irrevocably committed to a slow, inflationary spiral, and as in this year of 1968 that slow spiral sometimes begins to move too rapidly and people who living on fixed incomes get caught short in the vicinity of the pocketbook.

LAND BID RAISED

Last week Perry-Burton Realty Company raised the bid on an 18-acre tract of land immediately north of Kinston Plaza Shopping Center, owned by the Kinston School Board. At an auction earlier this month Virgil Dixon had been the high bidder at \$75,000 for the land. The raised bid of \$78,300 will cause the land to be re-advertised and sold again at public auction on January 7th.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

by Henry E. Garrett, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, Psychology, Columbia University
Past President, American Psychological Association

Q: Dr. Garrett, you have written of something called Project Talent. You said it was done by the Federal government. That seems a queer source for you to be quoting.

A: Not at all. Project Talent, was, in part, a nationwide comparative survey of the educational standing of White and Negro high school children. There were 773 high schools and some 500,000 students included. On 19 selected tests measuring aptitude and achievement in school work, the lowest scores were made in an all-Negro schools. As the number of Negroes increased in school enrollment, the scores dropped significantly. The all-White schools had the best records. That the government does not

base its policies on the evidence reflects — wouldn't you say? — the difference between science and politics.

SGT. COLE IN THAILAND

Sergeant Henry A. Cole, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred C. Cole, Route 2, Dover, is on duty at Korat Royal Thai AFB, Thailand. Sergeant Cole is a jet aircraft mechanic and before his arrival in Thailand, he was assigned to Eglin AFB, Fla. He is a 1965 graduate of South Lenoir High School.

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