



The Editor's Desk

ALFRED LEE HENDERSON
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH BLACK EYES



Welfare system invites corruption

Welfare and Children's Service caseworkers at the Albina Multi-Service Center are accused of authorizing illegal payments and bending agency policies. Mr. Juras, administrator of the Welfare Department, and the officials of the Bureau of Human Resources act as if this were something new. A full scale investigation has been launched to uncover illegal practices of these caseworkers who happen to work in Albina.

But it is common knowledge among the ranks of Welfare that caseworkers who care about their clients have been put in a position where they must lie, cheat and steal in order to help their clients.

As long as welfare recipients are allotted miserly sums to support their families with; as long as welfare recipients are looked upon as criminals or misfits and are punished by slow starvation; as long as children are deprived of the basic human needs, some idealistic caseworker will find a way to slip a little extra cash to a suffering family.

Many welfare recipients live in severe deprivation - children wait months to get glasses; old people must go without teeth, glasses and hearing aids, relegated to a life of inactivity and loneliness; pregnant mothers do not have adequate diets, endangering the health of their children and grandchildren; families live in houses without adequate heat. And what caseworker has not found children who have never had the luxury of wearing underwear or sleeping between sheets.

What is the recourse open to the caseworker who has to help his clients meet some of the bare essentials. The limited budgets allow only enough for housing and food, with extras being scraped out of those items. So if a child needs shoes to go to school, how can the caseworker obtain them? He can find a community agency to buy them, but when he has to find similar resources for 300 to 400 clients, time is not available for this activity. He can give the mother "transportation" money, hoping she will use it for shoes. He can pad his mileage and use the money for the shoes. He can ignore some of the family earnings. Any of these recourses is unethical and illegal. Some caseworkers buy the shoes with their own money, but he can't do this for everyone. So he slips into the habit of adjusting budgets a little bit, and breaks the law.

It is fitting that the investigation should take place in the Albina welfare office, for this office was to have been a program to test new methods and procedures, to try to develop humane relationships with recipients, to involve the community in the solution of this enormous problem. But it is no more than a transplant of the downtown office - the same philosophy, the same procedures, the same rules and restrictions, the same callousness. Since the office's establishment, the controls have been tightened, the budgets cut, the instructions gone out to discourage even those persons who are eligible from applying for assistance, orders given to cut the budgets as closely as possible - all in the interest of saving money.

Some caseworkers are able to accept this edict and go about cutting where they can, ever alert to fraud or overpayment. Others, remembering their orientation to the job, when they were told they were to be of service to the community and to be members of a helping profession, reject the agency and place their own ideals and concerns first. These are the caseworkers who attempt to serve their clients in a fair and just manner and these are the caseworkers who get in trouble.

The Albina office of Welfare and Children's Services have always been viewed with suspicion



and some fear by the downtown office. There has always been the fear that the staff would identify with the community or the multi-service center and thus get out of control. It has been the center of dissention from within the ranks, and most of the few rumblings and threatened uprisings in the welfare staff have originated in this office.

Now the welfare department should take a look at the Albina office. Next the state should take a look at how its policies are corrupting the best of its employees. The only answer to this would be to build a realistic, sensible welfare plan that could be administered fairly even by the most sensitive and idealist employee. In the meantime, perhaps the best thing would be to isolate the caseworker from his client - if he couldn't see a sick child or a lonely old man, maybe he could better control the purse strings.

What price justice?

Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo have been freed of all charges against them because of "extraordinary misconduct" on the part of the government in prosecuting their case. Jurors have indicated that had the trial continued, Ellsberg and Russo would have been acquitted.

The defense cost Ellsberg and Russo \$900,000. The government is estimated to have spent approximately \$3 million on its legitimate prosecution, plus whatever was spent by the White House espionage.

There is something wrong with a system that says a man is innocent until proven guilty, yet requires a man to spend a fortune to prove his innocence. If you were arrested today, it would cost several hundred dollars for your share of the bail to get out of jail, necessitate the hiring of an attorney, pile up investigation costs and court costs.

How many ordinary citizens can afford to pay several thousand dollars to prove their innocence?

It is common knowledge that the rich have greater access to justice than the poor. But there must be a way to give the ordinary citizen access to justice without losing all he has and spending the rest of his life paying.

A first step would be elimination of the bail system, which discriminates between those who can pay and those who cannot. The second step would be free access to legal counsel for all citizens, regardless of economic status. The Legal Aid and Public Defender systems now established for the very poor should be extended to cover all citizens desiring their services.

We have seen the results that Legal Aid has achieved against such public agencies as Welfare. If these services were available to all people, perhaps the laws would be applied more evenly and the individual would have a fair chance at redress. Perhaps the citizen would have the same rights as corporations and government.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Watergate

Dear Mr. Henderson:

I find your paper always informative and enjoyable. The editorial "Watergate: Roots in History" is devastating in its dispassionate enumeration of historical facts that had no "editorial-

izing" - one of the very best articles I read on this sordid case. If feel it's in line with the excellent reporting of the **Christian Science Monitor** on that topic.

Best regards!
Otto M. Knab



With Ron Hendren
A YOUNG VIEW OF WASHINGTON

TOWARD A BALANCED BUDGET

By Ron Hendren

WASHINGTON-In two out of every three years during the last half century, the federal government has spent more money than it has taken in.

Over the last 54 years, the United States government budget has been in a deficit position 37 times, and with the exception of the World War II years, the largest over-expenditures have occurred in recent years.

Indeed, since 1968 the deficit has ranged from \$13 billion to \$34 billion every year. Why have we persisted in the practice of spending more money than is available?

A significant part of the answer to that question lies in the procedures Congress uses to allocate funds. There are no legislative committees with the authority to oversee federal spending within the framework of the total amount of tax dollars available during a given year. Each congressional committee seeks authorizations and appropriations for the departments and programs within its jurisdiction without any really effective regard for the government's total annual tax income. Naturally, everybody wants an ever-increasing slice of the pie. The result almost invariably has been that more pie is given out than has been baked. And further into debt we go.

This decades-old disarray in the government's financial planning prompted newly-elected senators to write the Senate leadership early this year to urge reform of the budgetary process.

As a result of these and other pressures, the Joint Study Committee on Budget Control was established, and last month the committee submitted its recommendations.

Most significant among its proposals was that House and Senate committees on the budget should be established, whose responsibility it would be to see that all federal appropriations would be made within realistic spending limitations

that would not significantly exceed revenues.

Members of existing appropriations and finance committees would comprise two-thirds of the budget committees' membership, with the remaining one-third appointed by the congressional leadership from among the other legislative committees.

In theory at least, the Congress would not appropriate more than the total amount recommended by the budget committees; and again, in theory, that total amount would not significantly exceed the total tax revenues available in each given year.

If the study committee's recommendations are accepted, it would be the first major change in congressional appropriations procedures since the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 - more than 52 years.

Predictably, that time span roughly parallels the period of extraordinary deficit spending which has placed the country precariously in debt, and in often tenuous financial relationships with other world powers.

The proposed new arrangement would provide a means of forcing members of Congress to place strict priorities on their spending proposals. It would likely go a

long way toward reducing executive-legislative tensions over impoundment of funds - the White House vehicle for refusing to spend money appropriated by Congress. And, if taken seriously, it could provide an important key to containing a rising national debt which has to date played an important role in strangling all efforts to achieve a stabilized economy, control inflation, and keep both wages and prices within realistic bounds.



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