

the act. It did not work very well, but we did the best we could. How would you improve it?

Miss Fagan: The point is I feel that families and children must be protected by legislation. As in all legislation, the implementation is the difficult part and this is the field of the family courts. This means that the family court officials, along with the mothers, are responsible for tracing the men. I feel that while it is necessary to protect them it may be useless. I know this argument is made frequently: is it worth incarcerating the father?

The Chairman: Let us forget the father for a moment and say we do not locate him, or if we do he is in trouble. We have a mother with children; what do you suggest we do for her? She cannot trace the husband and the authorities have several other jobs to do. What do we do for her at that moment in time?

Miss Fagan: I think she would be eligible for family benefits in those conditions under the general welfare assistance. However, in order to become eligible she must prove this need, which means going to court, laying charges and providing information. It is within the powers of regional welfare administrators to dispense with some of the needs of the unmarried mother and the deserted wife, such as a declaration of paternity for an unmarried mother. This is rarely done and the complicated political machinery must go forward. I think it could be simplified if an affidavit of facts could be presented, rather than bearing the stigma of a court appearance. In this regard I must say that the workers on the project realize that most people feel that if they are heard they are well heard and given sympathetic attention. I am suggesting that this may be unnecessary. For example, a representative of the welfare department could take an affidavit and present the women's case to the court.

The Chairman: The suggestion that we had to deal with, as I recall it, was that after the order of the court was made it was then its responsibility to make the collections, and she would be paid automatically. She would not have to chase after the husband. The children would not chase the father. Is that the sort of procedure you are thinking about, or are you going even further?

Miss Fagan: That is one of the improvements which would be helpful, and this is done in some cases, but not in all. The legisla-

tion may be there, but the problem is putting it into practice.

Mrs. Matthews: In point of fact I think the onus is on the mother to appear in court, no matter what she has already gone through in the last 24 or 48 hours and may go through during the next 24 hours as a result of appearing in court. This is what we say in paragraph 52.

The Chairman: It is so hard to avoid that; it is not easy for the mother or the authorities, but how can you improve it?

Mrs. Matthews: This is the kind of procedure that we are recommending, the possibility of a representative of the welfare office, perhaps a social worker who may be involved with the family in other connections, perhaps a lawyer, appearing on her behalf rather than the woman herself, who is already overburdened having to appear.

Senator Quart: You mention at the end of this paragraph tracing a man through income tax returns.

Mrs. Matthews: Yes, this is if he has an income. This is one of the suggestions, the social security number or income tax return. In some cases the men, of course, are working and paying income tax. There is a social security number and various other methods which we have suggested.

Mr. Chairman, may I make a comment in passing reference to the very kind remarks Senator Quart made at the beginning. This brief is very much the work of a committee and, as Miss Fagan pointed out, we did not even agree always. Some of the points made in it are the thinking, opinion and feeling of women who are living in these conditions. This particular part is a very personal situation. It is a woman who is actually living in these conditions and these were her feelings. When the brief was being prepared, of the 15 people who are members of the brief committee, about six or seven each prepared a section, which we then attempted to research in our own volunteer fashion. It is, however, very much a brief of feeling and opinion.

Senator Carter: Did you check with any legal authorities to see if your suggestions for tracing were practical?

Mrs. Matthews: Do you mean the suggestion of the woman appearing in court?