

The poor are not going to change. Where are we?

Miss McGrath: Well, I do not think I said they are not going to change. I said it is going to be hard for them to change. It is not going to be easy but I think people are changing.

The Chairman: You have seen changes?

Miss McGrath: Yes, I think we have seen changes among people and Mr. Owen has mentioned that. We have seen changes in our own community just by the fact that people are getting together to discuss their problems. It is not going to be an overnight solution but I think we will be able to get some sort of change.

The Chairman: When you spoke of the maintenance income you said it was not the total solution, and this, of course, is something with which we agree.

When Senator Fournier asked you what services you would do away with, I do not recall your answer. I gather you did not specify. If you received a basic minimum income—for the moment let us consider it is adequate—would there be any reason for having, say, an allowance for the blind or crippled people or other similar allowances that we now pay?

Miss McGrath: No, I cannot say.

The Chairman: You cannot say.

Miss McGrath: I cannot see, sir, the need for those if we have the basic annual income.

The Chairman: If there was a basic annual income, you would agree there are many of these services that we have on that basis of a demographic annual payment we could do away with?

Miss McGrath: Yes, they could be re-channelled into other...

The Chairman: Is there anything else that could be re-channelled in that sense that occurs to you? You are a school teacher. You gave this some thought. You are very knowledgeable with your knowledge of the poor. What else could be channelled out rather than in?

Assume we have the basic income so we do not have to worry about that. You know the services and the social benefit that they receive from time to time. Can you think of any? There may not be?

Miss McGrath: No, not at the moment.

The Chairman: Well, then, let me put another question to you. If we pay a minimum income to "X" person, whoever he or she is, then what basic services would you have available for that person in addition to what the income was?

Miss McGrath: Basic services?

The Chairman: Yes. What do you have in mind?

Miss McGrath: I would think that a person would have access to medical care.

The Chairman: Yes, I am providing for that.

Miss McGrath: Providing for that. All these basic...

The Chairman: You people are a little slow on Medicare. I am presuming that everybody has got it.

Miss McGrath: I am sorry.

The Chairman: Now, you are very good in your social services. Your concepts are excellent. I am assuming everybody has got Medicare and you will have it very shortly, I am told.

Outside of that, let us see what you think.

Miss McGrath: Services other than that?

The Chairman: We have Medicare, we have dental care. We have all the things. You have the basic annual income. Where are we?

Miss McGrath: I think that we would need some sort of—these people, if they have the basic annual income and are able to work—that is one side of the ball. If they are not able to work...

The Chairman: Let us have it for the disadvantaged at the moment.

Miss McGrath: I think we should set up programs by which, even though they are capable of earning their living, they could do something by which they could feel, and not just feel, but be useful so that this type of program would be helpful.

The Chairman: What you are saying is that these people should have opportunities. I am thinking of something aside from that. What would they need in the way of social services? Would they need counselling?

Miss McGrath: Yes.