

regulations throughout the country. It therefore must be financed and administered by the Federal Government. This is the only way in which all Canadian citizens can be assured of equal treatment under the plan. Present programs (such as the Canada Assistance Plan) which are federal in origin, but which are administered at the provincial and municipal level, result in a wide range of arbitrary local decisions which create anomalies and discrepancies in what was intended to be a national, uniform program. Direct payments from the Federal Government to recipient families would remove much of the bureaucratic structure that has been built up to administer and police existing welfare programs. The provision of allowances as a right with simple eligibility requirements would also remove much of the stigma now attached to welfare payments.

There are many additional advantages of a federally financed and administered Guaranteed Income Plan, not the least of which is the unacceptability of the alternative possibility of ten different, provincially-operated plans with different standards, allowance levels, and regulations. Many of the provinces could not afford to support a G.A.I. without substantial federal financial assistance. Even with such assistance there would inevitably be differences in such plans, with the result that benefits and penalties would be determined by the accident of birthplace and residence rather than need. Federal-provincial agreements should be negotiated with a view to a truly national program without the optional provisions that have distorted Medicare and other programs to the disadvantage of Canadian citizens who live in particular provinces.

One desirable side-effect would be the impact of such a national plan on regional disparities. As the G.A.I. provides direct payments to families, its effects on living standards, aggregate demand, and attitudes toward employment and training could be expected to be different from those of equalization payments through provincial governments and regional development incentives. We think the effect of money going directly to people will be far more beneficial to all concerned.

It is also the view of the Committee that such a national plan will make a substantial contribution to the national unity of Canada.

A uniform, national program might be considered to provide somewhat greater benefits to rural than to urban recipients. In the Committee's view, there are a number of offsetting factors. While rural recipients have some advantages in terms of direct costs of living, they have limited access to many of the services that exist in urban centres.

A uniform, national program might also mean a change in the patterns of migration from the Maritimes to Ontario, or from rural regions to the overcrowded slums of our metropolitan centres. Such a program would not force people to remain in their original locale nor, as the present system often does, force them to move. It would allow all people the dignity of *choice*. If migration continued after such a program was in effect, people