

understanding of basic social causes. Most men wish to work. The nature of the human being is such that enforced idleness for the greatest proportion of men and women is the most exacting punishment to which they can be subjected. Useful occupation is a right and wish of all citizens.

In attempting to answer candidly and thoroughly the question as to the adequacy and effectiveness of present relief practices, we cannot escape the question as to how the personnel or administration of the relief program ought to be selected and maintained. I refer to the question of civil service requirements; or, as an alternative, politically dictated set-ups for administration. I submit that the handling of relief problems should be kept definitely out of the field of politics. The selection of officials to administer these programs ought to be strictly upon the basis of merit and of demonstrated fitness for the important class of work involved. Social workers, in the best sense of the word, and persons with business experience and judgment ought to be selected to disburse the public moneys in such great amount rather than politically selected workers with no training in this specialized field.

It is not an exaggeration to say that a social welfare program will be only as successful as are the people who are entrusted to carry it out. An important reason for eliminating political consideration is that, if politics is a guiding consideration in the administration of relief, public welfare activities will be largely discredited. In Maryland, I am happy to report, the entire personnel from the head of the department down to the humblest employee is included in the State Merit System. Appointments are made after all applicants are subjected to competitive examinations and the appointees are fully protected by law so that partisan politics occupy no place in the administration of our public welfare program. I repeat that this desirable situation does more than any other one thing to insure the integrity of administration in a way that will guarantee general public support.

The challenging question with which we are faced, it seems to me, is how effectively a democracy such as ours can cope with these vast social problems. I do not believe that it is out of keeping with the principles of democratic government that we should find this way. On the contrary, it is not only a legitimate, but a primary function of government to provide such a broad program of welfare for the people. We can bend our best efforts in this direction, even though we believe firmly that only a job in private industry, at decent wages and under wholesome conditions of work, can be the true prevention for continuing dependency.

The final statement of the Washington Conference on "Children in a Democracy" holds these to be the convictions of the American people. I quote:

"That democracy can flourish only as citizens have faith in the integrity of their fellow men and capacity to cooperate with them in advancing the ends of personal and social living.

"That such faith and such capacity can best be established in childhood and within the family circle. Here the child should find affection which gives self-confidence, community of interest which induces cooperation, ethical values which influence conduct. Secure family life is the foundation of individual happiness and social well-being.

"That even in infancy, and increasingly in later years, the welfare of the child depends not alone upon the care provided within the family, but also upon the safeguards and services provided by community, State and Nation."