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Editorial

With this issue the journal moves from its major focus of exploring practice issues to examining the effect fiscal policy is having upon families.

The reason for the change in focus is explained by Philippa Smith's statement in her article when she states "stress and constant worries of inadequate money and support remains one of the likely causes of family breakdown".

On an increasing basis family welfare agencies are finding they are having to provide material aid to many of their clients presenting at their agency. Those working in welfare are increasingly frustrated when they find the support needed by their clients is often financial, and the agencies are generally ill-equipped to give this support. Even though family welfare agencies can give support which is aimed at helping families cope with the stress they are under, the service is limited. As Mary-Grace Howard indicates in her article, funding for programmes is often on an annual basis, hence uncertain, and the funding when it is given often does not cover activities which are effective in family support programmes.

For this issue we invited some of those people engaged in shaping and influencing fiscal policy to write on the subject "Families and Fiscal Policy". In this collection of articles we have an explanation of current fiscal policies, analysis of problems and suggestions regarding development of new policies.

"Annie's Coming Out"

In the last issue we published a review of the book "Annie's Coming Out" (McDonald and Crossley). The review evoked an angry reaction from people working with Anne McDonald and Rosemary Crossley, as well as from the authors themselves. The reaction was in response both to statements made in the review which are disputable and concern that the authors could be distressed by the review. The journal regrets if the review did cause distress to the individuals involved. Australian Child and Family Welfare did not mean to suggest that the verdicts of the Supreme Court in the cases involving Anne McDonald were in any respect subject to question or to imply that any doubt now exists as to Anne's ability to communicate independently.

This year Anne McDonald sat for the H.S.C. English Expression, competing with hundreds of young people who have had years more formal education than Anne herself. We wish her well.

The issues faced by Anne and addressed by Rosemary Crossley in her article still remain. There are many people in institutional care who are denied their rights to a share in society's resources. As has been previously stated (Australian Child and Family Welfare Journal Autumn 1981), for those dependent on others for their physical care it is extremely difficult to know and insist on one's rights. Children, young people, the elderly, the mentally and physically ill can suffer in institutional care, if the care is not adequate or appropriate. Anyone who has worked in an institution knows that adequate resources are often lacking.

To repeat the question posed in the last issue (Editorial, Winter, 1981) "Do the programmes (care) which are available to the disabled and ill and their families truly reflect our attitudes?"

Margarita Frederico

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