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Editorial Comment

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Editorial Comment

Because of the great importance of the question of extending legal services to the poor and because this question should be of great concern to both lawyer and layman alike, THE CATHOLIC LAWYER has devoted this entire issue to a symposium on the major aspects of the movement to provide such services.

In recent years there has developed a growing awareness that the needs of the poor in the area of legal services are as great as, if not greater than, the needs of many more affluent citizens. In addition to problems involving domestic relations and deprivation of liberties, the poor are frequently the victims of injustice in economic areas such as housing and consumer purchasing as well as in their relations with various administrative agencies.

Poverty is more than an economic status—it is a state of mind. A person unable to climb out of the lower economic classes, both mentally and economically, tends to become discouraged and dissatisfied with the system in which he lives. He looks on society as the cause of his oppression and becomes disgruntled with and distrustful of all things pertaining to that society. Thus, the law becomes, in his eyes, a means of keeping him in his lower status rather than providing a means of improving it. Only by being convinced that the law can be helpful to him, that it can lift him out of poverty, can he be relieved to his feeling of dissatisfaction. This is the goal of the OEO and, in particular, of the legal services programs. The achievement of this goal is essential to any significant victory in the “War on Poverty.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward Tegen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

EDITOR