

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

*Incremental Reform
for Welfare System*

"Approaches to Welfare Reform: The Case for Incrementalism" by Richard P. Nathan, in *City Almanac* (Dec. 1976), New School for Social Research, 66 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

The "welfare mess" has been exaggerated, says Nathan, a Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution. Although streamlining and integration of many programs are sorely needed, he argues, others have been largely successful, both in themselves and as part of a general strategy to help the needy.

His "two-track" approach would expand those programs already shown to be generally sound in concept and execution. All "in-kind" benefits (helping 2 million persons in 1971 and 20 million today) have filled the money-income gap. But food stamps—an integral part of in-kind benefits—should be given outright to the needy rather than sold at a discount as at present.

Cash aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) has also worked, but Nathan says the program could be made more effective by instituting a minimum monthly payment and cost-of-living adjustment and permitting benefits nationwide for families with unemployed fathers. Another needed improvement: national health insurance to replace Medicaid and Medicare.

This selective, "incremental" approach, Nathan contends, would eliminate the need for a national income floor, advocated by Brock Adams, now Carter's Secretary of Transportation, and others. It would also avoid "comprehensive" welfare reform, which both stirs up Congress and tends to neglect the very diverse needs of the poor.

*G.O.P. Activism
Grows in South*

"Republican Party Development in the South: The Rise of the Contested Primary" by Merle Black and Earl Black, in *Social Science Quarterly* (Dec. 1976), University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Tex. 78712.

Between 1900 and 1960, Republican candidates for governor in the traditionally Democratic South were usually selected by state party conventions or nominated in uncontested primaries, which attracted few voters.

Since 1960, this pattern has begun to change, say political scientists Merle Black (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and Earl Black (University of South Carolina). But vigorous Republican gubernatorial candidacies have been more characteristic of the "peripheral" Southern states—Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia—than of the Deep South—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina. Only in South Carolina did the Republican

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vote evolve from virtual quiescence in 1962 (no G.O.P. candidate), through a strong challenge in 1970, to victory in 1974 (due in no small part to the disqualification of the original Democratic nominee).

Republican activism has been marked by a steady growth in the percentage of contested Republican primary elections—with intra-party struggles increasing as the level of G.O.P. general-election competition rose. Even so, it has been difficult to persuade Southern Republican voters to participate in party primaries. Contested Republican and Democratic primaries for governor were held simultaneously on 21 occasions in the South between 1960 and 1975, and seven Democratic votes were cast for every Republican vote. Two things are apparently required to produce high levels of grassroots Republican participation: a good showing in a recent statewide battle with the Democrats and a vigorous party primary struggle.

"Given time and resourceful leadership," the authors conclude, "the Republican primary in some [Southern] states may come to rival the Democratic primary as an arena of electoral choice."

How About an Election 'Jury'?

"A Modest Proposal for Election Reform" by Burton A. Abrams and Russell F. Settle, in *Public Choice* (Winter 1976), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va. 24061.

Tongue mostly in cheek, Abrams and Settle, University of Delaware economists, suggest cutting the cost of presidential elections by disenfranchising "excess" numbers of citizens now trooping to the polls every four years.

Their thesis: Now that presidential elections are financed with public moneys, the real virtue in voter participation is not more people casting ballots but a refining of the process. On the average, their data show, each voter puts in about one hour preparing to vote and voting. He spends additional time registering to vote; this "social cost" of voter registration works out to about \$270 million.

In the 1972 election, a few million voters, more or less, would not have made any difference either to Nixon or McGovern. Abrams and Settle therefore suggest a national "jury" to pick Presidents (without taking into account the closer 1976 Ford-Carter contest). Its members should be chosen from among the various groupings—men, women, blacks, whites, rich, poor—that make up the U.S. population, much as a pollster constructs his modest "model" or cross section to determine how millions of Americans will react.

About 18 million voters (rather than the 86 million who voted in 1976) should be enough to render a just verdict, say the authors. Aside from its efficiency, this system would instill an enhanced sense of political responsibility in those people selected for the "jury."