WELL FARE, NOT WELFARE

Long before psychologists sought to tell us why we acted as we did, wise men had learned a great truth. They had seen that most human beings had an inborn urge to improve themselves, to engage in worthwhile labor, and to lead self-respecting lives. There were always some who would take advantage of society and of others' efforts, but throughout history such drones have been a minority. Indeed, had they not been a minority, it is doubtful if mankind could ever have progressed.

New and welcome confirmation of this desire for self-betterment has come along, and in a most controversial field. A research group, called MATHEMATICA, based in Princeton, N.J., has discovered that giving poor families extra cash to supplement inadequate incomes has an excellent effect. According to one interesting comment, such cash brings out the Puritan in the recipients.

The survey was based on a 10% sampling of more than 7,000 families who, on an experimental basis, have been getting such cash help in New Jersey and Penna. Right across the board, most family heads stressed the point that the cash help acted as an incentive to better lives, including more remunerative work.

The importance of this survey is greatly enhanced by the fact that the experimental plan is so close to the national program proposed by President Nixon. Both the government-financed experiment and the presidential program are based on the expectation that the receipt of a minimum living floor will do something positive to a person's thinking and acting. The expectation is that the "welfare mentality"--whatever that may be exactly--will be replaced by a sense of greater personal worth, and this in turn, will lead to greater efforts at personal and economic self-improvement.

We feel that, in most instances, this reasoning is sound. For the most part, people do respond positively to good and progressive stimuli. This is an inborn trait in man, which has a more than human origin, and which lies behind mankind's ceaseless struggle to rouse and raise itself. It is wise government policy to base actions on this profound and hopeful fact. Furthermore, a wise use of such stimuli will only reinforce the age-old, sound conclusion that a man's return must, in the end be based primarily upon his work and service to society.

--Christian Science Monitor, April, 1970

"TO NIXON WITH LOVE" by Robert W. Buchanan

He lies to the rich, takes
advantage of the poor;
he's given us trouble and we'll
probably get more.
He can't lead the people,
he's a failure by far;
some he'll bribe, others he'll bar.

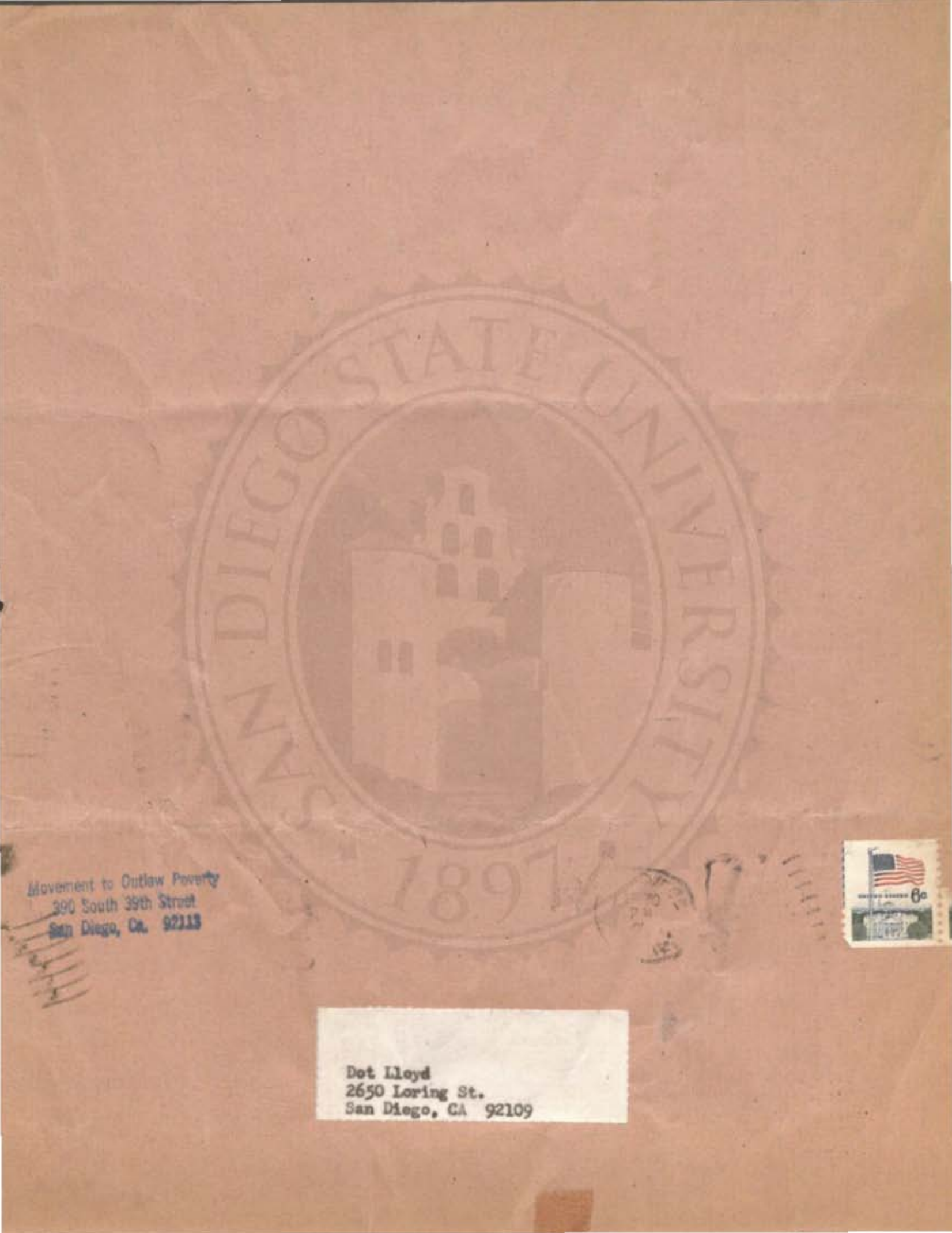
Starving children are at his feet;
they're in this great land,
with nothing to eat.
If he intends to go farther (politically),
which I'm sure he'll try;
he must first help his own people
and stop the hunger cry.

He was pushed into office
by the dev il's own hand;
to starve and mistreat the poor
of this land.

He stopped the basic needs
for people to survive;
and cut medicaid that keeps them alive.
Why would he destroy such a needed thing;
except to further his political dreams.

He should have been kept out
of office all these years;
because where there was hope;
there is now tears.

Or will we feed them, heal them,
and keep them warm,
so they can help protect us all,
so they can help protect us all
from alien harm.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