Surprisingly enough, people do ask that question, especially people on welfare. They feel that "life" has little meaning when they are forced to spend all their time merely trying to survive. Apparently, they don't like the idea of being controlled by a large, impersonal bureaucracy; and they feel frustrated when they fill out forms and wait in line at welfare offices, only to go through the greater humiliation of interviews. But none of this is surprising. We at the social services department have long been aware of this discontent among those of you who are our "customers." Therefore we thought it was appropriate to clarify the real purpose of welfare at this time. After all, since we already know everything about you, it's only fair for you to know something about us.

Welfare is nothing more than a form of investment. And like all good bankers, we expect some returns on our cash. We give you money and services in exchange for your good behavior. We enable people who would not otherwise have the chance to make it in our system, to feel like they are part of society. Through welfare, they can be basically like everyone else: they can go to school, raise a family, and make a positive contribution to their community. Even though they have less money to spend than most, they can shop like other consumers and do their share to keep the economy going.

Although welfare is difficult, it does make certain things easier for you; you don't have to worry about making basic decisions, since we take care of them on your behalf. You may wonder why we're so interested in your personal affairs, but this is only a part of our job, which is to organize the exchange of cash. We give you money and services in exchange for your good behavior. We enable people who would not otherwise have the chance to make it in our system, to feel like they are part of society. Through welfare, they can be basically like everyone else: they can go to school, raise a family, and make a positive contribution to their community. Even though they have less money to spend than most, they can shop like other consumers and do their share to keep the economy going.

The secret of our success has been to make you think that we can offer you something better, that we can somehow help you "get ahead." But the promise of "future success" doesn't always work. Many people already know that it doesn't really matter whether you're on welfare or whether you have a job— in the end, it's all the same. If you don't believe us, ask your social worker; he or she is probably not totally dissatisfied and will continue to support the institution of welfare.

To demonstrate our appreciation for your loyalty, we are giving out free Survival coupons (illustrated below), each worth $50 towards the purchase of any consumer items you might want. These coupons can be picked up at the Department of Social Services in City Hall any time during the next week. Our offer ought to make your life a little more interesting—when you think of all the things you can buy with 50 dollars, why should you worry about the way you live?

FOR YOUR OWN WELFARE
a committee of concerned San Franciscans

Ronald Born
Director, San Francisco
Dept. of Social Services

Rev. Cecil Williams
Pastor, Glide Memorial Methodist Church

For further information, telephone 558-3456.