

You will be interested to know, I believe, that considerable attention has been given to the question of the Government's relationship to the arts by the Department's Advisory Committee on the Arts which is aware of and endorses Mr. Weston's efforts.

Sincerely,

MAX ISENBERGH,
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND GOVERNMENT,
New York, N.Y., April 13, 1961.

PIERRE SALINGER,
*Press Secretary to the President,
The White House, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. SALINGER: Thank you indeed for your letter of March 24. We shall be keenly interested in the decisions about the proposals you made for music and art prizes.

In view of your professional interest in the arts and in government, your opinion would be of great value to our council about another matter. Due to the increase of public interest in the arts, the relationship of government, both State and Federal, to the arts is being widely debated. But there is little clarification about what that relationship should be in our country and opinions are widely divided.

Last year our organization applied to seven major foundations for grants to enable a national conference to be held and the findings published. All of the foundations recognized the need for such a conference, but the required funds were not forthcoming. We are reluctantly giving up this proposal.

The refreshing enthusiasm of President and Mrs. Kennedy for the arts and their conviction about the value of the arts raise hopes that a national conference on methods of cooperation between government and private initiative to forward the arts might be held under White House auspices. Such a White House Conference would give impetus to the creation of a bipartisan National Committee of the Arts suggested by Congressman Carroll D. Kearns.

We do not know what assurances of organizational support or financial backing would be required before a White House Conference could be formally suggested. I am authorized to convey to you the deep interest of our council in this proposal. We shall be glad, if requested, to promote the idea, but we are not in a position to undertake any major responsibilities.

The next meeting of our council is on April 27. It would be particularly appreciated if I might receive by that date some indication of your reactions to this letter. We fully realize that such a conference calls for a great deal of advance planning.

Sincerely,

HAROLD WESTON, *Chairman.*

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND GOVERNMENT, NEW YORK, N.Y.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1961

Due to delays in the organization of the standing committees of the 87th Congress, and in order to be able to include the numbers and sponsors of the major art bills that were anticipated, this report was not issued as usual in January.

NEW FRONTIERS FOR GOVERNMENT AND THE ARTS

The climate in Washington, in spite of snows, chill winds of a threatened recession, and storm clouds over Africa, has most noticeably improved for the arts. This change made an impact across the country on the day that President Kennedy invited a number of distinguished artists and scientists to attend his inauguration. A good augury had been the appointment of Gov. Abraham A. Ribicoff as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. If pending legislation is enacted, he will be in a key position in cultural matters for the new administration. Governor Ribicoff has a real interest in art, particularly painting and sculpture, and we have reason to believe that he will be quite sympathetic to constructive measures for the arts. A forward step was taken for the arts last week when President Kennedy appointed Mr. Philip H. Coombs Assistant Secre-