

In his 1955 message on the State of the Union to the Congress the then President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, called for the establishment of such a Federal arts agency and he declared that—

In the advancement of the various activities which will make our civilization endure and flourish, the Federal Government should do more to give official recognition to the importance of the arts and other cultural activities.

In June 1960, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Arthur S. Flemming, one of the Nation's top educators, told the House Education Committee that—

there is inadequate recognition of the fundamental importance of artistic endeavor in our national life.

He declared that—

The development of cultural and artistic interests serves a dual purpose, in that it contributes to the well-being of the individual by developing his creative abilities, and at the same time, it enables the individual to further enrich our civilization.

Then Secretary Flemming made this significant point:

I feel that if the Congress did act favorably on this proposal (to establish a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts), it would do a great deal in the direction of strengthening education in the arts, both at the secondary level and at the level of higher education. That is, it would give added encouragement to the efforts which are being made along this line.

Personally, growing out of my own experience in the field of education, I think we should put added emphasis on education in the arts. I think of it not only from the standpoint of the contribution which educational programs will make to the arts, but I emphasize it because I feel when people have the opportunity of participating in educational programs in the arts, it tends to stimulate the development of their creative abilities, and that those creative abilities will then show themselves and reflect themselves not only in the arts but in everything they do.

Secretary Flemming made it clear to the committee that while he continued to favor an emphasis on science in the curriculum he also felt that "we need to put emphasis in other areas" such as the fine arts. The point was made by him, as well as by other witnesses, that many of our engineering and scientific schools, for instance, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 30 percent of each student's activities are devoted to the fine arts and literature. Our scientists must be able to communicate, and they must have a grasp of the culture and civilization of the Nation which they are working to advance, enlarge, and preserve.

Here are Secretary Flemming's exact words:

Certainly, as we think in terms of stimulating and strengthening education in such areas as the sciences and engineering, which we certainly do, I do not think we should overlook the importance of strengthening educational programs in areas such as this (the arts) because, as I have indicated, I believe if we do it will pay dividends in terms of what happens in the sciences, in engineering, and so on.