

4. We shall give new impetus to our efforts at fostering cooperative marketing associations on a commodity-wide basis. We are convinced that this is the chief instrument through which family-type farmers can gain a fair share of the national income.

5. We shall continue steadfastly to promote recognition of the rights of minority racial groups in conformity with Christian social teaching, which states that all men are equal by reason of their natural dignity; that all men are children of God and all are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus.

Monsignor HIGGINS. Because of this condition, and the many other substandard conditions of rural America, the Catholic Rural Life Conference not only supports the proposed efforts of the Federal Government, but recommends even further activity by all segments of society.

Gentlemen, America has been hailed, and rightly so, for its generous aid to people in need in all parts of the world. The American people have provided this aid as a matter of conscience and religious conviction. This same generosity and sensitivity to the demands of conscience must motivate all Americans to joint ranks in an all-out war against poverty at home. Our response to this problem of poverty amidst plenty must be from the heart; it must spring from conviction; it must be intelligent; it must be comprehensive. To aid in evoking this type of response from the American citizenry—at least in some small way—we are pleased to submit these observations to assist you in your deliberations.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this testimony on the bill.

Mr. LANDRUM (presiding). Thank you, Monsignor Higgins.

With respect to your remarks directed to section 204, what assistance now is available under Federal law for parochial schools? Do the parochial schools receive assistance under the school lunch program?

Monsignor HIGGINS. They are operating under the school lunch program. I must say in all frankness, Congressman, I am not a technical expert in the educational field but I do know something about it from observation. That would be one of the major programs under which the parochial schools are included.

Mr. LANDRUM. Is there assistance also provided to the parochial school children under the National Defense Education Act—are you aware of this—such as counseling, testing?

Monsignor HIGGINS. I cannot answer that in detail but we have people on the staff that could provide answers to any specific question. Our approach to this, Congressman, ties in with the line of questioning which you are pursuing. We would not presume in these hearings to attempt to suggest to the committee in practical detail what forms the inclusion of parochial schools under this section of the act might take, but merely raise the question for future consideration by the committee in its deliberations. If existing Federal programs are models which can be followed that might be one helpful approach. But our concern is that in many areas of the country (this I know from personal experience in traveling the country constantly in my own work in many areas of the country) some of the very poorest people are in parochial schools and very likely in the practical order would not benefit in any way from paragraph (b) of the same section which says that nothing shall exclude the participation of parochial school children even though they are not enrolled full time