

Then on page 5, after reciting the prohibition against aid to any schools but the public elementary and secondary and the additional sentence—

No child shall be denied the benefit of such a program because he is not regularly enrolled in the public schools—

you conclude with this sentence:

We question, however, whether this provision of the bill will in practice be effective in assuring the special educational opportunities necessary for these disadvantaged children.

Am I correct that you are fearful at least that there is something lacking in the bill with reference to this, that there is a cloudy area that you are not sure exactly what is intended? Whether we should clarify it?

MONSIGNOR HIGGINS. No; it is not so much a cloudiness in the language of the bill, Congressman, as I see it, but rather the practicality of the matter. The language, I think, is quite clear, at least to me. As it is written, the bill says that if there are to be special educational programs for deprived children of whatever type, at the elementary or the secondary level, these must be conducted under public educational auspices.

Now, what section (b), paragraph (b) means, to me at least—I stand subject to correction—is that if a public school offers a remedial educational service for the deprived, the children from a parochial school or other private school may not be prohibited from taking advantage of that service in the public school.

Now, my difficulty, then, is not one of language but the one I referred to in the discussion earlier with Congressman Landrum, and that is whether or not, in practice, this is going to make it possible for the average poor deprived child in the parochial school to get the proper remedial services or whether, if the purpose of the bill, as it is, is to make available to all the children who need this aid, whether it would not be more feasible to have the necessary remedial services provided in the school which he attends, with the proper safeguards under the Constitution against using any Federal money for purely sectarian purposes.

I cited the case, in that connection, of the school lunch program which has been in operation for many years and, so far as I know, is operating quite successfully and without any difficulties.

I consider, as I said earlier, that it may be more important at this stage of the game to make sure that these youngsters get the adequate remedial services they need educationally than it is even to provide them with good food, necessary as that may be.

MR. GOODELL. Then you are saying, in effect, that you believe that this type of program in many instances would be most effectively administered in the area where the need exists and this might be in the private school and it might be in the public school?

MONSIGNOR HIGGINS. Yes; let us take a hypothetical example. For the moment I don't want to specify any particular area or town, but I think I could do so easily enough if I had a map in front of me. Let us take a town in a mining area where the majority of the children, and perhaps all in some small community, might be in a parochial school. These children are deprived. The purpose of the bill, the spirit of the bill, is to do what we can under the terms of this bill to