

Dr. IANNI. Let me see if I can draw the distinction between these situations. We presently review all questionnaires which come to the Office of Education. As a necessary first course, before we approve any research project, consent has to be obtained from the school system where the school system is going to be used for research, let's say, by an investigator who is present at a university.

Now, we subject all of these questionnaires to review by the Internal Clearance Committee and we feel that preventive measures are perhaps the best to use in this particular situation. So we would review these very carefully.

There are certain situations where obtaining direct parental consent could conceivably create considerable difficulty. One obvious situation would be where the research deals with mentally retarded youngsters or with individuals who are mentally ill, or where the sample contains so many cases that this could create some difficulty. We would prefer in these situations to insure that the children's involvement is voluntary but without demanding individual parental consent as a preceding concern for the Office of Education. And we would leave this to the school system to obtain.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, I can't envision the propriety of a retarded child volunteering without parental consent.

Dr. IANNI. May I ask Dr. Conrad to comment on this? He has been reviewing these proposals all along and could give some better evidence than I can.

Dr. CONRAD. Well, most of the questionnaires—in fact all that I have seen lately—have not asked questions of a psychiatric nature. They have not asked about religious feelings, and I haven't seen any on the area of sex, and so on. I know that a good many of the questions that have been submitted on a sheet here are bad examples with a very strong psychiatric flavor. We would eliminate such questions because we don't believe that questionnaires can take the place of a psychiatric interview.

There are other ways of getting this kind of information. The questionnaire is not the appropriate way to do it, as we see it.

Now, in the case of an examination in depth, if the questionnaire method were used, we would certainly require that the parental consent be obtained. But if, on the other hand, a child is asked to give his age, residence, and asked whether he likes school, what subjects he likes best, what kind of occupation he thinks he will go into—which is the kind of question that is most common—these are, so to speak, everyday questions and we feel that the child ought to cooperate in answering such questions to help advance knowledge, and that parental consent, specific parental consent, won't be necessary, and parents would be surprised to receive such a request.

Mr. CORNISH. Doctor, these are the instances where you won't ask for parental consent, is that right?

Dr. CONRAD. Yes.

Mr. CORNISH. The instances where you will ask for parental consent are the areas where you get into sensitive questions such as on sex and religion, and so forth? That is the distinction you make?

Dr. CONRAD. That's right, sir. We in general would prefer that such questions not be asked by questionnaire method. Such information is not best obtained by questionnaire methods.