

not be present today because of attendance at a prelegislative conference which is a high-level, important conference in our State.

I appreciate very much this opportunity to appear before this committee and its great courtesy in coming to Maine which I think is rather unusual for this type of hearing.

At the outset I want to say that we are very appreciative of the new and increased Federal aids for various educational programs. A very harmonious relationship exists between this department and the officials of the Office of Education and other departments. In fact, I think sometimes the visiting auditors or visiting officials from the departments spending some time in our office are looked upon as members of our staff.

In matters of development and implementation of programs, demands on the State for records, for presentation of statistical data, in the auditing, in personal consultations regarding matters which are subject to review, the utmost in cooperation has existed.

We have at the same time attempted to meet the requirements of the Federal statutes, diligently, thoroughly and without prejudice.

Time does not allow me to comment in detail on all of the programs but I will mention a few of those which are perhaps the largest and perhaps are of the greatest importance. We have about 40 different accounts in our office dealing with Federal aid. So it is a sizable operation.

Most or many of the problems as we see them are related to the statutes rather than to the administration and operation of the statutes.

The largest Federal aid program until very recently was Public Law 874 providing assistance to the federally connected pupils. Maine has, with its sizable airbases, about 79 communities receiving this type of aid. Now while the State does not handle any of the moneys involved, as payments are made directly to each administrative unit, the State department has had a very close connection with all phases of the program such as applications, financial records, reports, and all communications are cleared through our office.

Even yesterday afternoon I had a call from the Boston regional office making arrangements for one of their representatives to come and visit three or four school systems in our State next week. This is the closeness of the operation. This is a major operation involving nearly \$3 million annually and does take quite a considerable amount of time by members of our staff.

I would point out that there are no Federal funds for administrative purposes in connection with this law. We believe that the Federal Government, as in some other programs, should provide some financial assistance for the staff time required.

The same suggestions are proposed for Public Law 815, the construction of facilities for federally connected pupils. There has been periodic concern with both of these laws over the time lag involved in renewal or extension. This has happened a number of times and has involved a considerable amount of uneasiness.

I would hasten to add that the Federal administration of these two laws as I have seen them in my 13 years in the office as they have involved the State, have been conducted in a very efficient and highly