

Is this a good, healthy situation, from an educational standpoint?

Dr. HOPPER. I believe it is. This is one reason, obviously, why I am with the laboratory. It seems to me we have a new opportunity for excellence in education, with the laboratory being a vehicle for change to create new opportunities for our young people as well as adults.

Mrs. GREEN. What can you do there that you cannot do in the other offices?

Dr. HOPPER. Well, we might start with one of our three States, with which we are working now, local systems, where less than one-third of the title III funds of 89-10 have been committed. That is the State of Alabama. At the present time, we are working with a whole variety of school districts there to assist them in developing new and innovative programs where leadership is not otherwise available.

It is one thing for a group of people to come together and say, "We are going to make certain that our systems have the opportunity for growth, for development, rather than be dependent upon the legal structure." We are in the legal structure. We are related to the Office of Education through funding and reporting, through approval of our activities. On the other hand, we are a free agent to move for educational change.

This has not been present before. The best parallel would be in the field of agriculture, where we have established agricultural experiment stations to demonstrate change, the possibility of change, the feasibility of change.

Mrs. GREEN. In developing programs under title III, why cannot the State superintendent—or, if we follow on through the regional offices—offer leadership and service in this area.

Dr. HOPPER. This is a possibility. We know that the quality of State educational agencies varies from State to State. We know that the climate within States, the receptivity to Federal funds, the receptivity to change, varies from time to time, obviously. Therefore, from time to time, I would presume that there will be need for additional leadership capacity if we are to have consistent, continuing growth of our educational system.

On the other hand, I think that our role is quite different from that of the regional office of the Office of Education. It is one thing to be responsible for approving projects, and to be responsible to the Congress, the Executive, for their actions. It is another thing—well, you almost have a competition for excellence in making applications for many of the Federal funding programs.

One would be to raise the question of to what extent it is appropriate to assist in research design, on the part of a Federal agency, because this prejudices their attitudes toward the particular systems with which they have provided consultant assistance in developing project designs.

What I am suggesting is that it is possible for our laboratory, as a supporting technical service, to provide such assistance in design of research, without any charge to anyone.

We are not in this group of for-profit consultations. There is no charge for our service, where we assist local systems who are members of the laboratory itself, to develop reasonable research