

mation, while there are a great many pupils out of school in South Carolina, this is nothing like the number of out-of-school youth as is reflected by, as I said, the national definition of school age and then the school enrollment.

Mr. BURTON. Why do you not pull that microphone just a little closer to you.

How many youngsters aged 6 through 16 do you believe you have, in approximate terms, in South Carolina? You have about 665,000 attending school. Putting it differently, how many would not be attending that are of school age? What would be your estimate?

Dr. HOLLER. I don't have an estimate on that. Our school enrollment figures show a drop-out rate higher than, of course, we are satisfied with. It is improving every year. Within the last 6 to 8 years we have decreased the number of dropouts before the eighth grade to the point where, among the whites—and this is an estimate—about 90 percent of the pupils who are enrolled in the first grade continue on into the eighth grade.

We have about 70 percent of the Negroes continuing. That is a number given from memory. I would much prefer sending you a more accurate one. This is a considerable stepup from what was the picture 6 or 8 years ago.

Now, as you get on into the—

Mr. BURTON. How do you account for that improvement?

Dr. HOLLER. Well, we have been emphasizing the improvement of schools. We have been emphasizing meeting the individual needs of pupils. We have been emphasizing school attendance. We do not have, as such, a State attendance law at the present time. There is a strong demand in the State for that, but politics being what it is, you have to get around to where something will be done.

Mr. BURTON. Is there any difference in that which you have described as a statewide matter and the circumstances in your larger cities?

Dr. HOLLER. I did not understand the question.

Mr. BURTON. Is there any significant difference in the figures or percentages we find in your larger cities as distinguished from your rural areas with reference to either the percentage of students of school age actually attending school, or the rate of dropout? In other words, is this a uniform statewide experience or is it more commonly found in the urban or more commonly found in the rural community?

Dr. HOLLER. Here again I would have to speak from observation and not from statistics. I do not believe we have a wide range of difference between the group of school districts that would be classified as urban and the school districts that would be classified as rural. We do have probably superior general programs, if you take the urban as a group and then the rural as a group. But we do not have a wide range of differences because of the fact that in South Carolina so much of the support of schools is given from the State government.

Mr. BURTON. From which level?

Mr. QUARLES. The State level.

You asked why the dropout rate has decreased. I think as far as South Carolina is concerned, there is a greater emphasis and a greater interest in education than at any time during the history of the State. This is reflected both in the attitudes of the people toward education