

Section I. SUMMARY OF PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Using Title I to Produce Change

Panel IVA

Participants agreed that the poor of America, despite the potential of programs such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), still have little reason to believe they matter as human beings. The disadvantaged, adults and children, are failing in the educational system, and the educational system is failing them.

Participants agreed that there are many roadblocks to educational reform.

"If you're going to lead, you're going to have to cope with power," said panelist Mario D. Fantini, program associate, the Ford Foundation. "You need to be responsive to other sources of power and mobilize them. You have to be the internal agent of change. The educator needs power if he wants to lead, and he does not have power today."

Dr. Fantini, who directed Ford's 1962-65 Madison Area Project in Syracuse, New York, public schools, asserted that change can be effected through a "mutant group" which can "carve out a piece of the bureaucracy." While acknowledging that "we have no systematic internal system for change in the big bureaucracies," he said programs like Title I can be used to "create a subsystem for change."

He said that as a result of the Ford project, under which a much broader effort labeled "Crusade for Opportunity" has succeeded the original \$160,000 program, "half of Syracuse, in 3 years, is radically different." Educators, he said, could expect similar results in their own communities if they used their Title I allocations as a catalyst for change. "At the end of 5 to 10 years," Fantini said, "we could have a different process for teaching children." He added: "I would like to see this money going into education serve as change money. We've built into our [educational] program a kind of remedial approach, a kind of strengthening what is. This is not going to be the payoff. I am hopeful that people here can begin to use the new money not for strengthening what is, but for changing what is."

Margaret G. Dabney, professor of adult education at Virginia State College, asked Dr. Fantini if the strategy he recommends would work "in different parts of the country where we are faced with total conservatism at

all levels." He replied, "I look on every crisis situation as a chance for change. We should not just hang aid onto a system but we should use aid as an agent for change." He emphasized that he believes Title I people are the only group capable of setting in motion a large-scale program for producing a "steady search machinery" to change the schools.

Mrs. Dabney agreed that "we get hung up on a band-aid type of operation. We need to talk about a creative restructuring of the whole business."

Panel chairman John L. Cleveland, Title I coordinator for the Berkeley (California) Unified School District, concurred. "Whatever goals we have set for disadvantaged kids, they have not reached them," he said. "If I said there's a bomb under us right now, you'd make it, baby. . . . Educationally, we do have a bomb under us, under our whole educational system."

"The point is that we have no choice—whether we're going to lay the groundwork for change or sit around and be changed. We're failing. We don't have the answer. Eighty percent of these kids are going down the drain. . . . We've got to do the job quick or the whole system is going to blow up on us."

Panelist John J. O'Neill, dean of the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, said that "the question of the power structure is essential" in considering reform in the schools because "the schools always do what the culture wants." He said he was hopeful that colleges and universities can come up with some answers. "I think we have a staging area," he said, "but we don't have a beachhead and we don't have a perimeter."

What is lacking, participants agreed, is a full-scale commitment to the poor which would not only serve to improve their education and lives but would also instill in them a conviction of self-worth that should be their birthright. Mrs. Dabney reminded the group that "most of us could recite the psychological principles of poverty. So, why are we here? It's because these facts and principles and concepts really haven't worked their way into our guts."

Jule Sugarman, Deputy Director, Project Head Start, U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), said much responsibility rests with the administrator. "It's