

How Much Can Schools Really Do?

Panel IIB

Panel chairman Austin Haddock, director of Public Law 89-10, Oregon State Department of Education, in his opening remarks noted that the problem is a horrendous one now and is going to get worse.

"By 1976, if the population projections are at all accurate," Dr. Haddock said, "60 percent of our population will be 18 years of age or under. Some 50 to 60 percent of the population between 18 and 22 will be in colleges of one kind or another. This means roughly that some 75 to 80 percent of the population will be under the direct physical control of the Nation's educators.

"Are we ready for this awesome responsibility?" Haddock asked. "Obviously not. If we thought we were, we wouldn't be here."

Dr. Zigler emphasized the need for much more provision under Title I for the kind of experience that takes children out of the school so that they can have a good time and learn through the gratification of new experiences. "We need to think in terms of something in addition to what we are doing which does not put a heavy burden on the youngster. It should be indirectly related to the school so that he goes back to school feeling that the school is more than just being confined in the classroom and working for grades."

According to Carl Marburger, Assistant Commissioner for Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs, a critical issue is that of institutional change. Unless the institution of the school is adaptable to innovative practices and new programs, we simply phase these children back into the system and the same kinds of things take place over and over again.

Charles Benson, professor of education, University of California at Berkeley, stated that studies have been made which demonstrate that you do not move quickly from an expenditure to some observable change in pupil behavior. Outcomes are dependent upon a number of variables and we must be able to determine which combinations of activities yield results. Possibly it is necessary to work on certain strategic community variables like housing and employment.

Panelist Marburger noted the demise of Higher Horizons, the exemplary compensatory education project which is now defunct. "I think it is important for us to take a hard look at our compensatory education programs and examine precisely what we are doing. Unless we bring evaluation and research to bear upon what we are doing, our own programs can go down the drain the way Higher Horizons did."

Panel IIIB

There was fundamental disagreement within the room regarding the past performance of American education; and on the degree that change was necessary. Chairman P. J. Newell, Jr., assistant commissioner, Division of Instruction, Missouri State Department of Education, asserted that "American school systems have been a great success." American education, he said, has lacked resources and some children have therefore "been shortchanged." But, he added, "we have a system that we can be proud of, that can take its place in the world." The entire Title I program, he pointed out, "provides specific funds for specific kids in specific areas. We cannot restructure all of education with those funds even if we wanted to. We can hope to make great strides as more funds become available.

Panelist Robert L. Green, director of education for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, asserted that the educational system "has been a sorry failure," that it has been "set up systematically to make second-class citizens of Negro children." Dr. Green said that "we have created disadvantaged youth. Short-term solutions are a waste of time. The issue is not merely the attitudes of teachers and administrators, it is the American attitude." He proposed that teachers and school administrators begin to take leadership not merely in education, but in molding community attitudes on housing, employment, and other social issues affecting the life of the Negro.

Panelist Marvin Rich, executive director of the Scholarship, Education, and Defense Fund for Racial Equality, asserted that most enrichment programs fail