

140 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS

It offers to the schools the opportunity to strike at the roots of poverty by bringing intellectual awakening to millions of children who have in the past found only frustration and rejection in the classroom.

If the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is sometimes referred to as a revolutionary step in American education, it is because it presents to the schools the magnificent opportunity of playing an active rather than a passive part in the continuing task of perfecting American democracy. The Commissioner of Education, Mr. Howe, has called you to this national conference, at President Johnson's request, so that you can help American educators make the most of that opportunity.

This national program to aid the educationally disadvantaged has been in actual operation only 10 short months. I think all of us here are probably agreed that, even in this short time, it has had a tremendous impact on our schools, and effected some substantial benefits for our children. Over 7 million deprived children have participated in projects funded under Title I this year.

But it isn't just gross numbers that impress me. I'm impressed with the imaginativeness, the innovativeness, the simple brilliance of some of the projects I've been reading about.

In Charleston, W. Va., dinner is served 1 night a week in the school cafeteria to about 135 impoverished parents and children. Parents pay 35 cents, children nothing. Parents and children then go to separate study sessions. Subjects taken up by the parents were

selected by them, and include the new math, foreign affairs, and homemaking. The program is creating a new, close relationship between the school and the community and improving education for whole families.

In Tucson, Ariz., 200 college students are paired on a 1-to-1 basis with first graders from a slum school. They spend 1 hour each week together in an activity of their own choosing. The young adults are students in educational psychology, trained to ask questions and elicit responses which sustain interest, promote further reaction, and stimulate linguistic effort. It is the highlight of the week for both college students and first graders.

In New Mexico, Navajo children are going to summer school this year in a mobile classroom as they follow the herds across the summer grazing lands. In Arizona, Papago children go to jail to learn English: the tribal jail now houses a language laboratory center.

Mentally retarded teenagers in Bloomington, Ind., are being trained in a work-study project so they may continue a meaningful school curriculum and at the same time qualify for promised jobs in the community.

Some children have gained as much as 5 pounds in the first week of hot breakfast projects, and their ability to stay alert and participate in class has correspondingly improved.

In Rochester, N.Y., art action centers funded under Title I caused much excitement among both teachers and pupils. One nonverbal second grader began to talk after the first day in the art center.



Vice President Hubert Humphrey delivers the keynote address at the opening general session. Commissioner Howe and Secretary Gardner on the left; Under Secretary Wilbur Cohen and Director of Welfare Ellen Winston on the right.