

What you are seeking here today are the ways to make *every* Title I project a quality project.

You are asked to chart the way—or at least to find some of the guideposts—by which your colleagues throughout the Nation can steer their course during the coming year.

You are dealing with a complicated set of social, psychological, and educational problems. There are no panaceas for instant healing of the cultural and psychological wounds which the disadvantaged child carries with him to school—or those which are, all too often, actually inflicted on him in the classroom.

We all know, however, that these scars will not yield to the same old bromides that have failed in the past. We must find new and original approaches to education or we will go on condemning millions of Americans to generation after generation of intellectual and economic deprivation. In truth, what we are doing in our schools today simply does not work well enough for most of our children, and it does not work at all for millions of children whose values and experiences differ from the middle-class norm.

This knowledge is profoundly disturbing, I know, to you and to educators all over the country. You and others are raising some basic questions about education which you will undoubtedly explore in depth at this meeting.

May this ex-teacher raise some of the questions which he knows are of concern to America's educators and to your Government:

- Are schools structured to suit the convenience of the teacher rather than the needs of the child?
- Do some of our schools stifle initiative and the development of self-mastery?
- Do we stamp some children with failure from the day they enter the first grade?
- Are we actually reinforcing, in the classroom, the sense of inadequacy, of humiliation, of hopelessness, that begins in a deprived home environment?
- Can it be that our schools actually contribute to nonlearning among the children of the poor?

If any of these things are true, then it is time we re-examined some of the time-honored shibboleths of the profession and sought new insight into the educational process.

You will not, of course, be able to find all the answers at this conference, but you will make progress toward that goal. America is determined to build a Great Society in which all her citizens can be full participants. You are here to help move us forward toward that goal. You are going back to your own States to hold similar

conferences with your colleagues there. Yours will be the responsibility of transmitting to them the fresh and invigorating ideas which are bound to come from your discussions here.

Our goal of a Great Society is based, first and foremost, upon our abiding faith that all levels of government and all social institutions in this great land are ready and anxious to play their full role in moving America forward.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was perceived by the President and enacted by the Congress in the true spirit of a creative federalism which reflects that faith. It places, in fact, the principal areas of responsibility right where responsibility for education has always been in America—at the State and local level.

Local school superintendents and their staffs have the freedom to develop Title I projects tailored to the specific needs of the deprived children in their own communities. And they have the responsibility for seeing that the projects work toward that purpose. Theirs is the first, and the decisive, role in the three-way partnership.

State officials have a responsibility to review carefully the proposals of the local schools to make doubly sure that this great program is actually working to meet the needs of the children for whom it is intended. But their responsibility cannot end with merely approving or rejecting those proposals. Some schools in every State—usually those that need good Title I projects the most—lack the staff or the time or the originality to do effective planning on their own. Here is where State leadership can make itself felt.

We have heard much—and appropriately so—about our urban problems. But let us not overlook the special problems of our rural areas. Here especially we must provide adequate technical assistance—on all levels.

There is no room for apathy or pedestrianism at either State or local level. Enthusiasm, originality, and sound planning are the keys to making this program work. State and local superintendents must carry their full share in the partnership. If they do not, they are turning their backs not only on opportunity but on the children who look to them for help. The tragic loss will be all America's.

I am sure that one of the problems for which you will be seeking solutions at your conference is one which has beset the schools for many years. And it is a problem that new educational programs—for the time being, at least—tend to make worse rather than better. That