

rence in the evaluation of the proposals to the extent that in the third submission period there was complete agreement as it relates to the evaluation of the proposals.

Mr. STEIGER. How many people in the Office of Education are involved in the title III program?

Mr. ESTES. We have a staff of some 38 to 40 professionals on our staff in the Office of Education handling this program, plus additional people in the regional offices who give part time to it.

Mr. STEIGER. Can you give me any indication as to how many of the title III supplemental centers have been established without a favorable recommendation on the part of the State education authority?

Mr. ESTES. We approved some 27 proposals last year out of 1,089 that did not have the approval of the chief State school officer.

In each instance these 27 proposals received excellent ratings from the consultants outside the Office of Education that reviewed the proposals.

Mr. STEIGER. How many requests?

Mr. ESTES. Twenty-seven hundred proposals but we funded 1,089.

Mr. STEIGER. I will not take up any more of your time or the committee's time to pursue that question further. I am not at all sure that I accept the belief that the State educational authority is strengthened through title III.

Mr. ESTES. If I might interrupt, I think the State does play a very important role in title III. As you know, the Commissioner cannot approve a proposal until he receives a recommendation from the chief State school officer.

Mr. STEIGER. Yet there were 27 that were approved without that approval?

Mr. ESTES. That is right. In addition to that, a number of States are beginning to develop a statewide system, a statewide plan or design, for implementation of this title. They are assisting local school districts in developing proposals, as well as sitting with the local districts as projects are negotiated.

They are assisting in monitoring and evaluating, and, in effect, developing an overall strategy for their State.

Mr. STEIGER. But doesn't that really turn it around? Isn't the whole concept here one that should become evolved out of a statewide plan?

Mr. ESTES. Yes.

Mr. STEIGER. Aren't we getting the cart before the horse?

Mr. ESTES. Not exactly. We have, I would say, a half-dozen States that, in effect, have virtually complete approval authority over title III because of their ability at the State level to provide this overall leadership.

Mr. STEIGER. Then would you agree that really the desirable goal here is if the title III centers are to be established, that they reflect an overall State plan relating to the most urgent educational problems of the State in some kind of a consistent, coordinated manner?

Mr. HOWE. Absolutely.

Mr. STEIGER. This is the way it should go?

Mr. ESTES. Without a doubt.

Mr. HOWE. It seems to me there should always been room for the offbeat idea, that title III, in calling for innovation, ought to support