

and operated is that the State educational agencies are really not in too good a position to administer the purposes of the title. If that is the case, then why are they strong enough to administer title I and II of ESSA and NDEA and a whole host of all kinds of other programs?

Secretary GARDNER. Let me break that question in two parts and answer the part that I can answer. I will ask Commissioner Howe to answer the other part.

I do hope that, I wish that we could get away from assuming that anything but complete lodging of responsibility in the State is a vote of no confidence in the State. We have an educational system in which local school districts have had an honored place and an important place and they have some right to be heard when they insist that we not now move to a system in which everything is absolutely centralized in the State.

Commissioner HOWE. I have just a brief comment. Taking up from the Secretary's general comment it does not seem to me that the way title III is now set up is a vote of no confidence in State educational agencies.

Their opinions are very much considered; 95 percent of our determinations are in correlation with their determinations about grants. As I said earlier, there are a number of States in which we are moving really to a planning base by the State for title III and we are accepting that planning. So that what we really are developing is a cooperative endeavor around the making of grants to local educational agencies with the State and ours involved. As I implied a moment ago, I see down the road the possibility that responsibility ought to shift. I don't know how to shift a time limit on this, that ultimate responsibility ought to shift.

We have discussed this at some length among ourselves, with chief State school officers, with advisory committees. We have had a number of chief State school officers tell us that now is not the time to make such a shift, that they are not ready to take on these responsibilities.

So we are looking at this proposition in very much the same light that your question implies you are, perhaps coming down with a slightly different judgment, but I don't think there is any difference in principle.

Chairman PERKINS. Mr. Scheuer.

Mr. SCHEUER. Mr. Secretary, I welcome you here today knowing of your conviction and your commitments. Now, it is because of that knowledge that I join my colleagues in a deep sense of frustration at the course of the program and the lack of forward thrust in it.

I wish I could join my colleague from Iowa in describing the educational excellence in my district. Unfortunately in about half of my district the average eighth grader is 3 years and 4 months behind grade level in reading.

With all of the efforts that I have made to bring some kind of resources into the district, the net result of the 2 years of our programs has been trivial.

I am desperately frustrated. I feel that while we are creating a program of comprehensive education planning on the State and city levels we have not performed that function on the Federal level.

I am even more frustrated from the excellent reports we have received from your agency, three reports from the National Advisory