

ment actually existed, and we are hopeful that the link will be built, and that there will be effective collaboration with the States.

Mrs. GREEN. I don't want to monopolize the time. Let me ask maybe one other question.

Mr. Secretary, you have spoken several times very eloquently about decentralization, that you want to strengthen regional offices of education.

Do you see in this decentralization that they will be decisionmaking offices? For instance, on contracts, that they will be making the decision on the awarding of contracts? How far will this decentralization go?

Secretary GARDNER. Well, I would like to ask Harold Howe to comment on that. I would just like to say two or three sentences about my own philosophy.

We have discovered that the kinds of coordination in the field that are so essential, for example, in the cities today, where you have health, education, housing, employment, poverty programs, all requiring a degree of relationship and interlock, it is exceedingly difficult to obtain that kind of coordination and putting together pieces at the local level, if our representatives at the local level have no delegation of authority.

If they are simply people at the end of a telephone, it is very hard for them to sit around with other people and arrive at some mutually agreed-upon result for that city, that community, whatever it is.

Mrs. GREEN. Let me stop you there, Mr. Secretary, and let me give you two examples.

I agree with what you have just said. That it would be very difficult for a regional man in charge of a regional office.

The staff subcommittee went to San Francisco to set up the field hearings. The person who was the head of the regional education lab did not know that there was a regional office of education in San Francisco until the staff arrived.

Now, what do you think it would do to the person who heads your regional office of education, if the regional education lab man has a higher authority and has made no contact with the regional office of education that you want to strengthen?

And the second example is when we were holding public hearings we asked the chairman of the board of the regional education lab, "What are you doing?"

And she said, "We are doing great innovative things. We started a kindergarten here, held a teachers' conference and collected some bilingual material."

And I said, "How do you coordinate your work with the regional office of education?"

She said, "What?"

And I said, "Mr. Freeman Beets."

"Who is he?"

"He is the head of the regional office of education."

"I have never heard of him. I didn't know anything about this."

And I said, "My question was, How can you start out on these great innovative programs for the Regional Education Lab, if you haven't even made an inventory of what the regional office of education is doing?"