

Mrs. GREEN. I have this in mind, when we pay the regional education lab directors almost in all cases more than we pay you, Mr. Commissioner, I am in agreement. But I just wondered whether we as a Federal Government have a right to offer higher salaries to the regional education lab personnel than the State can?

This is my point. When you have a private agency, you bypass the State limitation.

Commissioner HOWE. I want you to know that I thoroughly support this idea of paying the regional lab directors substantial salaries. I think that ultimately, this will help the leadership element in education, that it moves because it has some precedents to move on.

This helps to create some of those precedents, and therefore, whenever any educational administrator is provided with good salary, ultimately the benefits of this get around.

But let me comment briefly on some of your questions about the regional aspect of the office, because I think we ought to present some more detail here about that. First of all, the regional offices of the Office of Education, I think, have been less well developed than other aspects of a regional activity in HEW. The decentralization in public health and in other areas has gone farther earlier than it has in education.

We have had a person called a regional representative in education, who has had a sort of ambassadorial role—no control over programs, relatively little effectiveness, except as a consulting kind of person in the regional office to represent education.

We are now rapidly about the business of changing that person's title and his functions, and we have changed his title to the regional assistant commissioners. We are now identifying those programs among our some 60 programs in the Office of Education, which can be transferred over to his administration.

Just last week in Atlanta, for the first time, we moved four programs—I believe it was four, wasn't it, Nolan, to the administration of the regional assistant commissioner. He is the final signoff authority on these. He will be approving the handling of funds for particular programs in those seven States that that office serves.

May 1, we will do the same thing in Dallas. We have a date set up for San Francisco, Kansas City, and so on. I can't recall what the dates are, but we are moving directly to transfer, to decentralize the administration of certain of our programs, and to give the regional assistant commissioners a direct responsibility for them.

We have already moved the small grants program in research to, I believe, the Chicago office, haven't we, Nolan, and to the Atlanta office as well? So that we are in a stage of change with this. The civil rights program, or the whole Office of Equal Education Opportunity program, is one I am very anxious to move in this decentralized way, because I happen to feel that we will get more acceptance of our purposes and our requirements if the decentralization of this brings on to the scene a negotiation with local school people, people who come from the place where the local school people are, so that we are moving before July 1 to decentralize our activity in civil rights.

All of this will build the position of the regional assistant commissioner, and give him a real responsibility, and will put us in closer touch with the States, not more distant from the States.