

This is why decentralization might appear to be necessary. You would feel rather than to adapt the Office of Education to the categorical aid programs you should adapt or adopt the programs to—so that they can flow through these State departments?

Mr. LUMLEY. That is right. The categorical aid programs can go through the State departments without any change, without this regional organization.

Mr. ERLÉNORN. Am I also right in assuming you would like to see the phasing out of the categorical aid programs and phasing out—phasing in of block grants or tax sharing, some general aid to education rather than categorical aid.

Mr. LUMLEY. Our feeling is that eventually the categorical aid going through the State departments does lead you to a general or block grant program. That is correct.

Mr. ERLÉNORN. Along the same lines you are no doubt aware that there are some proposals to create a department of education separate from HEW, to raise the Office of Education to departmental status. It occurs to me that the apparent need for this gain is the fact that we have so many administrative details as a result of our categorical aid programs.

My own personal feeling is that if we change the structure of the Office of Education to raise it to Cabinet status, because of the immense burden put on the Office of Education with the categorical aid programs in the last 6 to 10 years, we are in a way admitting that we have locked in categorical aid for the future, we are not going to move in the direction of general aid to education.

Would you feel this might be a legitimate observation?

Mr. LUMLEY. I guess I have to answer that by saying that the NEA has a resolution, adopted by its representative assembly, favoring the establishment of a department of education.

Certainly I would also think you have some basis for your opinion.

Mr. ERLÉNORN. My inclination was to say, yes, when you see that the Office of Education has had a tremendous growth in the last few years with the burdens we have put on it. It now is a large going concern but I think it is a result again of the categorical aid programs.

I think if we do create it as a separate department we are taking the tack that categorical aid is here to stay.

Mr. LUMLEY. Incidentally I was going to say that our resolution favoring the Department of Education was passed by the representative assembly before the Office of Education became as large as it is. It was passed basically on the fact that education should be an important function of the Federal Government.

Mrs. Gereau is a former State commissioner of education. I know she always likes to comment on operations of State departments.

Mrs. GEREAU. I was sitting here nodding agreement with many of the things you said, Mr. Erlenborn. The point of strengthening State departments of education is not going to be achieved only by putting more money in title V—I think we should have more money in title V—but will be achieved best by giving them the responsibility, and the opportunity to do the things that they are legally constituted to do, and seeing to it that they do them, and not setting up some other structure that can make it easy for them to say, all we do is just distribute State funds and put on a few consultants and that is all.