

1718 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS

I believe that where one to two billion dollars is involved the Federal Government should accept an obligation to sharpen its distribution technique; and that the Congress should appropriate to the Office of Education, a sum of money which will be used expressly to devise a more accurate and more current indicator of concentrations of poverty.

Finally, I would urge the Committee to consider authorizing the Office of Education to extend the period of encumbrance on administrative funds. Local educational agencies now are authorized to encumber educational grant money to August 30; but funds for state administration must be closed out at the end of the fiscal year. This is an inconsistency. It is particularly troublesome when congressional appropriations are not made until late in the fiscal year. It means, in effect, that the states are drawing upon next year's funds to administer present year programs.

In elementary and secondary education the need today continues to be money, but along with money there is a necessity for hard-headed assessment of the results of the use of that money. I believe it incumbent on the Congress to appropriate the full authorization of 1966; but I believe too, that it is incumbent on each of the states to achieve an assessment of the social benefit of Federal programs. This assessment should enable the Congress and the public to judge what progress has been made; how well we are doing what we have tried to do; how better we can do it.

The most dramatic effect on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to date has been the evocation of a sense of urgency about the problems of the poor and a readiness to innovate. The task now is to build solidly on that interest.

Sincerely yours,

IRA POLLEY.

(The following editorial was submitted by Congressman Brademas:)

[Life editorials]

AN EDUCATIONAL BARGAIN WORTH KEEPING

While the draft gets plenty of attention in Congress, a small, valuable, but little-known program may die of congressional inattention. It is the National Teacher Corps.

The Teacher Corps serves in the combat areas of American education—in the schools of the slums and the rural poor. In 29 states, its 1,200 corpsmen pay special attention to "culturally deprived" children, whose schooling must provide values and training that their homes do not. Teacher Corps teams—each consisting of a veteran of about five years' experience in slum schools, aided by from three to 10 young teacher interns—go into these schools by invitation only. They work under the close supervision of community school officials, who can fire or transfer them on a day's notice. There are plenty of safeguards, in short, against federal government meddling in local schools.

But because it lacks any effective lobby on Capitol Hill, the Teacher Corps's budget was shrunk to \$7.5 million, which runs out this June. With that modest amount, the corps has been able to reach a quarter of a million children with a variety of unorthodox teaching techniques. Corpsmen make frequent home visits to encourage parents, whose previous dealings with school officials too often have been only to hear complaints. Rock 'n' roll songs may be played in the class with the hope that these often uncommunicative youngsters will learn to express themselves by explaining what they think the lyrics mean. Their reading assignments can be on their special folk heroes, such as prizefighters, and they learn mathematics by computing gas mileage for the hotrods they so admire.

The Teacher Corps interns who conduct such classes are also studying part-time at universities nearby. In two years, with the federal government paying their tuition, they can earn masters' degrees in education. Eighty percent of them have said they want to stay on in slum schools whose greatest problem is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers.

Outside of Congress, the Teacher Corps has won impressive support from the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. Practically every school which has corpsmen this year wants more of them next year. The Teacher Corps needs a supplemental stopgap appropriation of \$12.5 million by the middle of April to set up summer training programs for the 2,400 new interns the Administration has recommended, and an additional \$36.5 million to carry the corps through the full fiscal year. At these prices, it remains the best bargain in the federal education program.