

Mr. SCHERLE. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. GARDNER. Yes, I will be glad to yield.

Mr. SCHERLE. Mr. Crook, I would like to ask you a question in regard to political activity by VISTA volunteers.

Do these people make applications to VISTA to help on a voluntary basis with no pay whatsoever? Is that the basic assumption of their connection with the VISTA program, just to make application and you accept them?

Mr. CROOK. We accept them after a screening process and selection. They are not automatically accepted because they apply.

Mr. SCHERLE. During the 1966 election were the VISTA people officially connected with your organization allowed to register voters?

Mr. CROOK. I was not director of VISTA at that time. I am notified by Mr. Pace they were not permitted to register voters. But they were permitted to encourage registration.

Mr. GARDNER. Would the gentleman yield 1 second? I would like to question you; what do you mean by encourage voters? Put them in an automobile and carrying them to the polling place and saying this is where you register and sign your name?

Mr. PACE. I know of no instances where that specific and direct activity took place.

Mr. GARDNER. What would be your feeling about that?

Mr. PACE. My personal feeling?

Mr. GARDNER. Yes.

Mr. PACE. My personal feeling would be that encouraging voter activity means just that. Pointing out that elections are coming, telling them that they have a right and responsibility to express their own opinions by voting.

Mr. GARDNER. Is this done at meetings?

Mr. PACE. Personally, I think that would be an appropriate avenue for that, yes. At meetings of a nonpartisan nature.

Mr. CROOK. The very stringent guidelines I have read here would prohibit that kind of activity.

Mr. SCHERLE. Did you know that the VISTA people in Omaha, Nebr., registered voters in the 1966 election?

Mr. CROOK. Again I am sorry; I have to say I was not with VISTA in 1966. I do not know that. If you have that information I would be very interested in seeing it.

Mr. SCHERLE. I will have it for you perhaps as early as next week.

Mr. CROOK. Thank you.

Mr. SCHERLE. May I ask also what you intend doing with it when you have it? Were these guidelines established after that election, or prior to it?

Mr. CROOK. These guidelines, as I understand, were established prior to that election and were adhered to by VISTA.

Mr. SCHERLE. If these people that are affiliated with VISTA take it upon themselves, to participate in political activity, what are you going to do with them? Fire them?

Mr. CROOK. Yes, sir.

Mr. SCHERLE. And that is all?

Mr. CROOK. I believe that is all we can do with them.

Mr. SCHERLE. I know, but they can be utilized very effectively prior to an election, can't they?