

Chairman PERKINS. You have covered in general your general presentation, you are ready for questions?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Chairman PERKINS. Mr. Dent?

Mr. DENT. I have no questions. If I remember correctly, when you were before us before there was a question left unresolved, and the gentleman on my left from New Jersey had asked a question dealing with activities of your legal service through your staff into the area called "other than acting as an advocate for the poor" and acting rather as an attorney at law in all phases of law, other legal services.

I dropped the question at that point because I know that he is more informed on it than I am. What's happened on that? If I remember right, you were to give us some kind of a survey on whether or not that was happening in the Legal Services Branch of OEO.

Mr. DANIELS. In other words, Mr. Johnson, the question presented to you at that time—

Chairman PERKINS. The gentleman from Pennsylvania yields to the gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. DENT. Yes.

Mr. DANIELS. The question was whether or not the Bureau of Legal Services of OEO would undertake to write wills for so-called indigent persons. Well now, I believe the end response was that at this informal luncheon meeting we had that you would write a will.

I would like to have it stated for the record under what circumstances would your attorneys be authorized to draw up and execute a will for a person who comes to your department for legal assistance?

Mr. JOHNSON. Only when the income and the other assets of the individual involved were so minute that a private attorney would not be interested in the case.

There have been rare instances—I know of only two or three, for instance, out of some 20,000 cases that have been handled in the Washington project, that involve that. What they turned out to be were people who had some family heirloom of no value financially, but, you know, emotional value, sentimental value to the family, and they wanted to pass that on to a specific individual.

They could not afford a private attorney to do it. There were no assets in the estate for a private attorney to earn any fee out of it, so they did undertake to write the will in those cases.

Mr. DANIELS. Assuming that interrogation of the testator would disclose that he had substantial assets, be it either real or personal property, would your attorneys undertake to draw the will under those circumstances?

Mr. JOHNSON. He would not, because a private attorney would be only too happy to do that.

Mr. DANIELS. Under what circumstances does your department undertake to render assistance in divorce or separation proceedings?

Mr. JOHNSON. Our projects handle divorce and separation proceedings as they would any other legal matter, as is evidenced by the statistics. However, they have been able through the help of family service agencies and so forth to effect reconciliations, dispositions other than divorce or separation for the vast bulk—something like 80 percent of the divorce and annulment cases that come to their attention.