

Let me ask you this question. What if the Congress were to determine that the Community Action Program should be placed in the hands of HEW, would you have the capacity to administer this program?

Mr. CARTER. Of course, that is an assumption. I would extremely regret it if the Congress made that decision, because I think it is a wrong decision.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Because of your incapacity to do the job?

Mr. CARTER. Because I think the best place to do the job is in OEO.

Mr. DELLENBACK. HEW would not have the capacity to do the job effectively and well?

Mr. CARTER. I think, sir, I would like to reiterate what I have said. The best place to do it—that is, stating the universe, including HEW—is in OEO.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Regardless of your opinion and evaluation as to where it could best be done, in your opinion, if the Community Action programs were to be placed in HEW, could you handle them effectively and well? Could you administer these programs in HEW effectively and well?

I don't ask for a comparative evaluation of whether you think somebody else can do the job better. Let me ask you whether you feel HEW could handle these programs effectively and well.

Mr. CARTER. I think that would present a very serious question. We have a major department administering many, many programs. We are engaged in our own efforts to bring our programs under the best possible administration.

Secretary Gardner is devoting an awful lot of attention to that, including the organization of the Department.

I think, leaving aside the issue, I think it would be really questionable whether the Congress in this present posture in time should undertake to transfer a major program, such as the Community Action program, to HEW.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Your answer is not responsive.

Chairman PERKINS. He is trying to answer it the best he can.

Mr. DELLENBACK. I recognize the difficulty of Mr. Carter's position. I stated that initially. He keeps giving me a comparative evaluation of whether or not he feels it could better be done—

Mr. CARTER. No, sir; I think my last answer was not comparative. I did not mention OEO in my last answer. I attempted to be responsive to your question. I said it would raise a serious question. We have not considered this kind of possibility.

You are asking me today—I am telling you one of the serious questions that would occur to us is if Congress were to transfer these programs.

I cannot conceive that Congress would transfer these programs. You are asking me an iffy, hypothetical question, and I am trying my best to respond.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Do you have in HEW and in other programs—and I don't need specific answers as to where, but in any of the programs that you are administering—the personnel and capacity to innovate and experiment?

Mr. CARTER. Certainly we have the capacity. We do it in a number of different areas.