

Mr. CARTER. I think this is the most critical problem that we face. There are other population groups that have problems, but we are talking about one that touches perhaps every other group.

This is the most difficult problem, as the statistics that we have gone through around the work experience program, and the like, have shown. We are dealing with an extremely difficult problem, a very complex problem involving many kinds of programs, many services.

It is extremely difficult to point to any other single issue where the need is as critical as it is here, except perhaps in the field of civil rights.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Do you feel that we ought to establish a new department of some sort in order to take the pressing problems in the field of civil rights and to innovate and experiment where HEW, Justice, and other departments are not doing that job?

Mr. CARTER. We have something like that. Congress established the Civil Rights Commission in 1957, and they have been going ever since. They established the Equal Opportunity Commission.

I think this does not mean for a moment that HEW does not have to discharge its responsibility under civil rights, and it does not mean that HEW does not have to discharge its responsibility in poverty. But it also means that there needs to be somebody there who is concerned about these problems every day and is focusing on them and is trying to find the best way of doing something about them.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Do you mean that there are other branches or aspects with which HEW deals in its multitudinous subdivisions that it is not able to concentrate on effectively because they are lost in the general heterogeneity of what is involved in HEW?

Mr. CARTER. I am back to the comparative. I am talking about the best solution for one of our most pressing problems of the day. That is the problem of poverty in the United States.

Mr. DELLENBACK. We are being hypothetical, I recognize, and anything which presupposes a change in that which is must, to a degree, be hypothetical.

What if there had never been an OEO, would HEW be hesitant? Had Congress faced these responsibilities and decided initially to hand to you and your people in HEW the responsibility for innovating these programs and pushing them forward, would you have said you could not do it?

Mr. CARTER. It is quite clear that we always in the end undertake to do whatever the Congress asks us to do. But I am trying to say to you that I think Congress made the best decision when they put it in OEO.

Mr. DELLENBACK. You have cooperated with the Department of Labor in certain programs in the past, and at present you are still doing so, is that not right?

Mr. CARTER. Yes.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Is there any great friction in the cooperation?

Mr. CARTER. Like between all human institutions, we have our problems, but, by and large, we work well together.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Would you anticipate increased difficulty or major difficulty if a phase of the work which OEO is doing were to be placed in the Department of Labor so that some of your dealings would be directly with them, rather than with OEO? Would you anticipate