

Mr. HAWKINS. Were there any dissenting opinions?

Mrs. BENSON. I am trying to think back to the time when we went through the formal consensus procedure, which was 1966. The reports we have had since then are implementing the original position and I would have to look that up, Mr. Chairman.

I do remember that not everybody agreed in every way with even the idea of the role of the Federal Government in this but the agreement among the leagues—and there was no regional difference in this—was really very overwhelming.

Mr. HAWKINS. Also, I understand, in answer to one of the questions Mr. Steiger asked, you indicated that there were many innovative ideas such as the residential skill centers and the bulk of industry Job Corps concepts, that you thought that such innovative ideas could be accomplished within the framework of the existing Office of Economic Opportunity, and that you saw no need for the development of a new agency or to spin off programs to various established agencies in order to accomplish these innovative ideas.

Mrs. BENSON. Yes, that is right. We would say that probably eventually, with more experience and time, in order to have a better idea of how they are working it, it would probably be quite logical to spin off some of the programs. Some of them have already been spun off, or already are run by other agencies, such as the Department of Labor, but we don't see the value of moving the operations of the OEO to another agency, or to other agencies, because we do feel that we have a need for a central concentrating agency.

Mr. HAWKINS. Then I assume that the thrust of your statement in this regard is that there will continue, at least for some time, to be a need for a coordinating agency that cuts across the established agencies, and that if the Office of Economic Opportunity is to be dismantled, that there still would be a need for some council or some agency to do what the Office of Economic Opportunity is now doing.

Mrs. BENSON. Yes. Yes; that is our position.

Mr. HAWKINS. Then you reject the idea of creating another agency, whether you call it a council of advisers or any other agency under another name to do this, and that for the time being you support the concept of retaining this function in the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Mrs. BENSON. Yes. That is right. We do see a need for something called the council, as it is presently in the administration bill, or in the Opportunity Crusade, but not as a substitute for the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Mr. HAWKINS. Now in your statement you also emphasize the participation of the poor, in the resolution of their own problems. Do you see any threat of the discontinuance of this concept, if the programs are going to be spun off to other agencies? In other words, do you think that this concept can still be retained, even though the various programs are fragmented among existing agencies?

Mrs. BENSON. Well, I don't think I could say it would not be maintained. I think it would be much more difficult to maintain this emphasis on the participation of the poor, if the various programs were placed in other agencies.

Now maybe in the future this would not be so, but the whole idea of the participation of the poor involving their own problems is—it