

PROPRIETARY SCHOOL OPERATIONS

The following discussion briefly summarizes the salient features of proprietary school activities, which are covered in more detail in Appendix B. On the basis of enrollment data, it appears that the proprietary schools might be making a more substantial contribution in instructional areas that are also in the public school domain than had been suspected. The effectiveness with which these schools prepare students for employment and place graduates in jobs could not be assessed with any high degree of confidence, but fragmentary data indicated that the majority of students from certain schools had little difficulty in finding employment related to their training.

Since it appeared that most students in the proprietary schools could meet the admission requirements of the junior colleges or the evening adult education programs, one must ask why an individual would invest a substantial sum for a study program that was also being offered at no charge in a public institution. Students most frequently mentioned time convenience and course content in explaining their decision to enroll in a proprietary school program. They observed that they usually could start class within a week after enrolling, and that the course length set completion within a relatively short period of time—less than a year and often under six months. They pointed out that the curriculum was entirely skill-oriented and free of what they considered to be nonessential subjects. Finally, many students mentioned placement service, believing that the school's continuation as a commercial enterprise would depend on the degree to which its students were successful in securing employment after training.

The detail developed on instructor educational background and employment experience suggests that most proprietary school instructors could satisfy the basic qualifications for teaching assignments in those public school vocational programs that do not require a general education teaching credential. Yet, the teaching experience reported by most proprietary school instructors seldom included a public school affiliation; and, similarly, few public school teachers indicated that they had proprietary school teaching backgrounds. Further investigation into the characteristics of proprietary school teachers might provide some rationale for this apparent lack of interest on the part of each teacher group for employment in the other's field.

The operation of a number of these schools as vendors in local, state, and federal government-sponsored training program suggests that they might also represent a potential for expansion of public school vocational programs, particularly in areas of short term or modest student demand.

Dr. BRADEMAS. Is Dr. Meaney here?

Dr. Meaney, I am particularly pleased to welcome you this morning, one of my constituents, and a member of the faculty of one of the greatest universities in this country, the University of Notre Dame.

STATEMENT OF DR. JOHN W. MEANEY, PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION ARTS, AND ASSISTANT TO THE ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT FOR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA; ACCOMPANIED BY HAROLD WIGREN, PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Dr. MEANEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am accompanied this morning by Dr. Harold Wigren, who is president of the Joint Council on Educational Telecommunications.

Mr. BRADEMAS. Thank you. We are glad to have you here. If it is any reassurance to you, you will be pleased to know that the very able adviser who sits on my right here and who serves our whole Committee on Education and Labor with great skill as its associate general counsel is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Mr. William F. Gaul. So you are among friends.

Mr. WIGREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.