

In each regional office an accounting, clerical, and training—ACT—division has been established which provides support to the teams and relieves them of time-consuming but necessary routine operations and clerical functions. This structure provides these major improvements and benefits:

(1) It gives small businessmen better and more comprehensive service from the time of initial interview until the loan is paid, sold, or otherwise removed from our portfolio.

(2) It clearly defines areas of responsibility and accountability.

(3) It provides for closer control of operations and creates standardization in application of procedures.

(4) By freeing our technical personnel of routine duties, it assures more effective utilization of personnel.

With regard to the committee's concern about operating uniformity existing throughout all our regional offices, trained central office specialists conduct in-depth surveys of each regional office to insure that a loan applicant at one regional office receives the same consideration and application of policies, regulations, and procedures as he would in any other regional office.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hendricks, from time to time there is called to the attention of this committee by our various colleagues that there appear to be more loans going into one area than another, or you are not making any loans in one area, or are not making loans in another area. I think it should be emphasized at this point that it is your policy, as you just pointed out here, that there is no discrimination as to area or in the administration of loans.

Mr. HENDRICKS. This is correct.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. One region receives the same consideration on applications, some policies and regulations on loans as other regional offices?

Mr. HENDRICKS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. If there are any charges to the contrary, they should bring them forth to this committee, but this is the policy of the Administration.

Proceed.

Mr. HENDRICKS. Thank you.

With regard to cotton gins, I would like to report that by arrangement with the National Cotton Council of America and several ginners' associations, we met with their top representatives, and individual cotton ginners, on March 1 in Memphis, Tenn., for an all-day meeting to discuss the cotton ginners' problems, the financial assistance available from the Small Business Administration to assist the ginners and otherwise develop a better understanding of their needs.

Our southeastern and southwestern area administrators, as well as the 13 regional directors representing the principal cotton-producing States, were in attendance at the Memphis meeting, as well as a representative of the Department of Agriculture.

The cotton gin associations have advised their members of the assistance available from SBA, our policy and eligibility requirements and procedures for requesting loan consideration.

In addition, the National Cotton Council has arranged for industry representatives to work with each of the regional offices.