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ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL

AID IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

(TITLE)

BY

LARRY SMITH

PLAN B PAPER

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INTRODUCTION

The active interest of the federal government in public education has been aroused in recent years as never before, primarily because of the critical importance of education to national security, technological progress, and economic growth. These pressing problems, like others, require highly trained personnel. American leadership in the coming years, and perhaps even American survival, depend in large measure on the providing of top-quality education for a substantial fraction of American young people.

Few persons would deny the importance of education to our society, for it is clear that without a highly developed system of education, the United States could never have assumed the position of world leadership which it presently holds. Thomas Jefferson, one of the great spokesmen for education, stated: "The Commonwealth requires the education of her people as the safeguard of order and liberty".

A strong supporter of education for all the people in the United States was the late President John F. Kennedy, who stressed the necessity of developing education on a national scale.

While few question the national interest in education, wide differences of opinion exist over the appropriate role of the federal government in expressing this interest and in providing funds for education. Considerable debate in congress and in the press has occurred over the desirability of federal aid and over the appropriate forms of such aid. This debate is almost certain to continue and to grow even more lively in the next few years.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the consideration of these issues by outlining the history of federal programs, and pointing out the principal issues which must be resolved. The problem of federal involvement in education is so vast that the study will include the role of the federal government only as it pertains to public education. The study is concerned with the origin and development of federal aid to public education and the general purpose of each program outlined in the study.

Organized chronologically, this review of the history of the federal governments involvement in education has been divided into three sections: (1) Early Period from 1785-1916, (2) Middle Period from 1917-1957, and Contemporary Period from 1958-1965.

CHAPTER I

GROWTH OF FEDERAL PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Belief in the right of every individual to equal opportunity, and in political democracy as the guarantee of that right, created the public school in this country.¹

It was assumed that the schools and other educational institutions which grew in response to local needs would be adequate for the nation's interest. Education was among the subjects considered in the original debates on the federal constitution. From those debates came the decision that the federal government was not to be primarily responsible for the provision of education; this was a responsibility of the various states.

In the three centuries of our growth, there have been several shifts in the patterns of responsibility for the conduct of education. In colonial times and the early days of the Republic, voluntary secular groups, religious bodies, and the family were largely responsible for

¹U.S., Educational Policies Commission National Education Association of the United States, Educational Responsibilities of the Federal Government (Library of Congress, 1964), p. 1.

maintenance of schools and imparting knowledge to new generations.¹ While each of these elements is still significant in our total effort, the role of the public agency had become increasingly important in the total understanding for more than a century.

This shift from private to public responsibility was followed by a redistribution of relative responsibility between the local community and the states. With the general acceptance of universal education during the 19th century and the vast expansions of school programs in the 20th century, state governments were obliged to take an increasing interest in providing guidance and leadership, in setting up minimum standards, and in assuming a growing share of the financial support of the economically disparate local communities. Later, changes in technology brought about a shift in the incidence of the market, of community and of public opinion. With this trend toward a new sense of national community came a corresponding growth of federal participation in education.

Traditionally, the federal government's role in the partnership for public education has been basically noncoercive and supplementary. Except for the enforcement of federal policies pertaining to issues such as civil rights and religious freedom, based upon the United States

¹Ibid., p.2.

Constitution, federal action has been limited to advice and financial contributions-both of which may be rejected by state and local authorities. There is little doubt that the federal government has a responsibility for trying to express the national interest in education. But the question is raised whether the congress ought to have power to decide which aspects of education are worth reinforcing and which aspects do not need support, and whether the executive agencies which carry out legislation and affect the preparation ought to have influence over such decisions. This power and influence are in fact increasing.

CHAPTER II

EARLY PERIOD (1785-1916)

The Ordinances of 1785 and 1787

Federal aid to education is two years older than the Constitution of the United States. It was begun four years before Washington took office as president. The first federal grants for public education were in the form of land grants. The origin of the land-grant idea goes far back into colonial history where it was tried in one form or another by most of the original thirteen states, most extensively in Connecticut and Georgia. In 1785, while the federal government was still operating under the Articles of Confederation, it became necessary for the Continental Congress to decide how to sell the public domain, which had recently been created by the transfer of the western claims of the original colonies, to the United States. The manner of sale for this public domain was set up in the Ordinance of 1785.¹

In the Land Ordinance of 1785, the Continental Congress decided to sell the public lands in the northwest and decreed that, preparatory to being sold, these

¹Julia E. Johnsen, Federal Aid for Education (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1941), p. 9.

lands were to be surveyed and divided into townships comprising thirty-six sections of 640 acres each. A section was the smallest unit that could be bought, and the price of one section of every township was to be used for maintaining public schools. This policy of government support for education was affirmed in 1787 with the passage of the Northwest Ordinance, which stated: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged".¹

The area provided in this ordinance was approximately the size of Texas and was of great assistance in helping to establish our public school system. There remains some question whether these grants were set up to dispose of public lands or whether their purpose was chiefly to aid schools. Daniel Webster, however, recognized the importance of the Northwest Ordinance when he stated:

I doubt whether any one single law, or any lawgiver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of more distinct, marked and lasting character than the Ordinance of 1787. It set forth and declared it to be a high and binding duty of government to support schools and the means of education.²

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, The Role of the Federal Government in Education, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 15-16.

²The American Assembly, The Federal Government and Higher Education, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Columbia University, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 35.

The Enabling Acts

Following the Enabling Act for the admission of Ohio in 1802, in which congress granted the 16th section of each township "to the inhabitants thereof" for schools, in 1803 it strengthened the hand of the state in education by placing control of all school lands in the state legislature in trust for the purpose mentioned. At the same time congress granted a township to Ohio for a seminary of learning and stated all educational land grants were to be "for schools and for no other use, intent, or purpose whatever."¹ With minor exceptions this generous policy was continued for other new states carved from the public domain which were admitted until 1848. Texas, Maine, and West Virginia received no public lands for common schools, Texas having no federally owned lands, and Maine and West Virginia having been made by dividing older states.

With the establishing of the Territory of Oregon in 1848, congress provided that the 16th and 36th sections of each township should be reserved for the benefit of schools in any state or states to be established from this territory. California likewise was granted these two sections by acts of congress in 1850 and 1853.²

¹Hollis P. Allen, The Federal Government and Education, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950), p. 62.

²Ibid., p. 62.

In later Statehood Acts the land grants became even more extensive, with some states receiving even four sections, as in the case of Utah and Arizona. A total acreage of over 98 million has been granted by the federal government to states for public schools. The largest grant of land was made in Alaska, with an estimated acreage of 21 million acres approximately a fifth of the total acreage granted. The size of the land grant to Alaska may be accounted for by the size of the state and too, its long status as a territory with the majority of the land being government owned.

The Morrill Act

The next venture into wholesale support for education by the federal government began to be agitated in 1838 and by 1850 had reached a point where the legislatures of Michigan and Illinois called on congress to make land grants for the establishment of agricultural and mechanical colleges in the states. Senator Morrill of Vermont made himself the spokesman in congress for the movement, and the first Morrill Bill passed congress in 1859, but was vetoed by President Buchanan.¹

The bill was reintroduced in congress in 1862 in the high tide of the Civil War, was passed and duly signed by President Lincoln, and became the law. Under the

¹Julia E. Johnsen, Op.cit., p. 11.

Morrill Act a total of 11,000,367 acres of federal lands were eventually granted to the various states for the establishment of agricultural and mechanical schools. These grants, laid the foundations for the great state universities that now occupy so important a place in higher education. Since these grants were handled with only a little less disregard for probable future value than were the earlier grants for public schools, they did not actually produce a large amount of money by present standards, but the impetus that the act gave to the establishment of agricultural and engineering schools and through them of universities for general higher education was an enormously important one.¹

The United States Office of Education

Two years after the close of the Civil War, a federal education agency was established to promote the cause of education. The original legislation, sponsored by Congressman Garfield from Ohio, provided for a Department of Education to be directed by a commissioner appointed by the president. The department operated as an independent agency until 1869 when it became an office attached to the Department of the Interior. From 1870 to 1929 it was called Bureau of Education; since then it has been called Office of Education. The frequent

¹Ibid., p. 11.

change of name from department to office, to bureau, and back again to Office of Education, indicates the problem of finding the proper role and location within the federal structure for a federal education agency.

The establishment of the Federal Education Agency was the culmination of a long campaign vigorously supported by the National Association of State and City School Superintendents. The act creating the Department of Education, which later became the Office of Education, assigned to it responsibility for the collection and diffusion of information about education and the encouragement of education. These purposes were to be effected through the collection and publishing of educational data, through educational research, and through the administration of funds and various programs.

The Office of Education has performed a valuable service by encouraging the development of uniform records and reports for education in all states. The Biennial Survey of Education in the United States is a fundamental source of information for studies of trends in American education. Other reports covering special aspects of education, including education in foreign countries, provide valuable information that has aided the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems.¹

¹The Federal Government and Public Schools (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1965), p.11.

The Hoar Bill

In 1870, George F. Hoar, Republican representative from Massachusetts, introduced a bill involving general aid to common schools. The purpose of this bill was to compel the establishment of a system of education throughout the country. Where this system was not provided by the state, the president was to be given the power to appoint a state superintendent of schools. The Secretary of the Interior was to be given the power to appoint all district superintendents. This bill also empowered the federal government to control texts.

The Hoar Bill represents the only attempt ever made by the federal government to legislate direct control over local systems of education. The bill never came to a vote, but it did serve to focus attention on the question of federal aid to common schools, and thus stands as a landmark in the study of the problem of federal aid to education.¹

The Blair Bill

The Blair Bill proposed to aid in the establishment and temporary support of common schools. The bill passed the Senate three times in 1884, 1886, and 1888, but it was never approved by the House of Representatives.

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, Op.cit., p. 19.

Some of the provisions in this bill included direct financial aids to schools and grants administered by state and local officials.

The controversy, both pro and con, concerning the Blair Bill are of particular interest to us today because of their contemporary ring.¹

The Hatch Act and the Second Morrill Act

In 1887, The Hatch Act added agricultural experimental stations to the land-grant colleges which resulted in the encouragement of scientific investigation in the field of agriculture.

The second Morrill Act of 1890 introduced the principle of federal grants for instruction in certain branches of higher education. These permanent annual endowments set the stage for great expansion of agricultural and mechanical schools.

The Smith-Lever Act

The next large-scale general educational ventures of the federal government came in a series of bills and appropriations designed to promote education for vocations and for the problems of practical living. The first of these was the Smith-Lever Act, passed in 1914, the purpose of which was to improve agriculture and rural life. Under

¹Ibid., p. 21.

appropriations made to the states providing that they must furnish equal amounts of money in order to receive the grants. The Farm and Home Bureau program under the direction of the county agents was set up in rural areas.

This program has probably developed into the best organized, most intelligent and most effective large-scale program for adult education that has ever been tried.

Federal action in the development of vocational education in this country began to take form in 1906 with the formation of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. The Society helped to focus the nation's attention upon the need for industrial education. Later, congress authorized the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, and on July 1, 1914 the Commission reported its findings and recommendations. Two and a half years later President Woodrow Wilson signed the Smith-Hughes Act.¹

¹The Federal Government and Public Schools (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1965), p. 19.

CHAPTER III

MIDDLE PERIOD (1917-1957)

The Smith-Hughes Act

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 created a Federal Board for Vocational Education, composed of the Secretaries of Agriculture, Labor and Commerce, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, and three citizens representing industry, agriculture, and labor. The purpose of the Smith-Hughes Act was to foster vocational education and home economics training for high school students. This act stands as one of the first examples of federal aid provided to schools below the college level. It also involved the federal government in the payment of teacher salaries and included the principle of matching funds.

Smith-Towner Bill

The Smith-Towner Bill, first introduced in 1919, called for a Department of Education at the cabinet level plus an appropriation of 100 million annually for teacher's salaries, for the teaching of illiterates, for the teaching of physical education, and for teacher training programs. These funds, too, were to be awarded on a matching basis. The Smith-Towner Bill was not enacted. It is interesting to speculate about what would have happened had the

Department of Education been placed on the cabinet level.¹

Civilian Conservation Corps

When the depression swept across the nation and schools closed their doors, leaving children uneducated and teachers unemployed, the federal government, to allay the ravages of the depression and to protect education, developed extensive emergency educational programs.

One of the earliest measures, and one of great interest to educators, was the establishment in 1933 of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which enrolled over 3,000,000 young men between 1933 and 1941.² At first this experiment in caring for the nation's youth did not provide extensive educational opportunities. Later, however, congress found it desirable to provide and emphasize a variety of educational services in conjunction with the program of work carried on in the camps.³

This program introduced a new form of federal participation in education. The federal government did not restrict itself to its traditional role of supplying financial assistance. It set up and operated a new educational enterprise to supplement existing local and state programs. The educational program of the CCC

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, Op.cit., p. 23.

²Dawson Hales, Federal Control of Public Education (New York: Bureau of Publications Teachers College Columbia University, 1954), p. 60.

³Ibid., p. 61.

was under the jurisdiction of the United States Office of Education, and the administration of the entire program was centered in Washington.¹

In the CCC camps scattered throughout the nation many thousands of boys were taught to read and write, and several hundred thousand received instruction in elementary and secondary subjects. Other enrollees, through the cooperation of colleges and universities, were given extension and correspondence courses on the college level.

Works Progress Administration

The federal government developed other extensive educational programs through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Included among the projects sponsored and paid for were nursery schools, correspondence courses, literacy classes, worker education, parent education, adult education, public affairs education, homemaking education, and avocational and leisure-time activities education. These projects were initiated, directed, and financed by the federal government and represented separate and distinct federal activities that supplemented existing local and state programs. Most of the teachers participating in this work were drawn from relief rolls. At one time as many as 44,000 teachers were utilized.

¹Ibid., p. 61.

They instructed enrollments that at times exceeded 1,255,000 persons.¹ Control of the programs was centered in the federal government. Local and regional administrators and advisors were without great influence.²

Public Works Administration

The PWA, originally the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, was established in 1933. It assisted in building all types of public works. Through it many grants were made for educational buildings. The extent of its activities may be judged by the fact that, by April 1940, it had made possible nearly \$1,000,000,000. worth of school buildings.³

National Youth Administration

Another measure sponsored by the federal government was the provision of financial assistance for needy students. The funds for this purpose were administered by the National Youth Administration (NYA) which allocated them to secondary schools, colleges, and universities for the employment of needy students between 12 and 24 years of age in "socially desirable work".⁴ Federal officials formulated the policies and handled many of the detailed administrative problems. It was essentially a Washington

¹Ibid., p. 62.

²Ibid., p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 62.

⁴Ibid., p. 62.

directed affair.¹ Although the college and secondary school students aided were not necessarily on relief, this program was the first attempt by the national government to equalize individual educational opportunities throughout the country. Too much attention, can, of course, be paid to this phase of the program in view of the fact that NYA functioned primarily to alleviate unemployment. Nevertheless, attendance in educational institutions was made possible for thousands of young people who might not otherwise have been able to attend.

The Lanham Act

The Lanham Act, passed in 1941, was directed toward the alleviation of hardships in communities whose schools were expanding as a result of proximity to military establishments and war factories. The federal government thus accepted its responsibility for what, in many cases, amounted to disrupting community services almost overnight.

The Lanham Act also attempted to redress the imbalance in local communities resulting from the fact that the military installations did not appear on the local tax rolls. Some communities were faced with suddenly increased school enrollment with no substantial increase in the local tax base. The act helped to

¹Ibid., p. 63.

equalize this load with payments sometimes termed "in lieu of taxes".¹ The act made funds available for school buildings, school services, and nursery schools for children of mothers' who were involved in defense industries.

Readjustment Act of 1944

By far the most extensive venture into government aid for students in our history was the program of education benefits for veterans which began with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the "GI Bill of Rights".² The GI Bill was a new concept in veterans legislation. Veterans of previous wars had received substantial benefits from the federal government in cash and in land, and disabled veterans had received hospital care and special pensions. Nothing was done to train or educate those who had been lucky enough to get through the war without injury.

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (often referred to simply as Public Law 346) extended education to veterans in unprecedented scope. Most veterans were eligible. Each was free to select his own course of study, his school, college or other training establishment approved by the authorized agency in the state in which

¹Hollis P. Allen, Cp.cit., p. 104.

²Alice M. Rivlin, The Role of the Federal Government in Financing Higher Education (Washington, D.C.:The Brookings Institution, 1961), p. 64.

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¹Hollis P. Allen, Op.cit., p. 104.

²Alice M. Rivlin, The Role of the Federal Government in Financing Higher Education (Washington, D.C.:The Brookings Institution, 1961), p. 64.

the establishment was located. He was allowed time not in excess of one year plus the number of months he was in the service, not in excess of forty-eight. The law prohibited control or supervision by any federal agency over any state educational agency or any educational or training institution participating in this program.

In the history of federal policy, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 has been called "the Twentieth Century Morrill Act".¹ It led to enrollment of unprecedented numbers of college students and gave thousands of young people an education they might not have received otherwise.

Similar benefits were later extended to veterans of the Korean Conflict, but the Korean Bill (Public Law 550) modified veteran's educational benefits. Under a simplified system of allowance, the individual veteran became responsible for payments to the educational institution.

The Impact Laws

In 1950, congress enacted two laws-Public Law 815 for school house construction and Public Law 874, which provided funds to meet operating costs of school districts. They were essentially continuations of the Lanham Act of 1941, since the concept behind the three

¹The American Assembly, Op.Cit., p. 51.

laws was to provide money for community services in lieu of taxes because federal property is not usually taxable on the local level. It was the Korean War which caused the increase in federal involvement with factories and military establishments, leading to undue pressure on communities in the vicinity of those installations and factories.

The provisions of these laws are classified in three categories: (1) children who live on federal property and whose parents work on federal property; (2) children who either live on federal property or whose parents work on federal property; and (3) children whose parents have come into the district as a result of federal contracts with private firms.¹

The Impact Laws, as they are commonly termed, are popular with school administrators because they serve to alleviate the financial difficulties of fast-growing districts and they are also free from any control or influence by the federal government.

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, Cp.cit., p. 26.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD (1958-1965)

The National Defense Act of 1958

A new debate over American education came into sharp focus with the launching of the first earth satellite, Sputnik, by the Soviet Union in October 1957. The astonished reaction of the American people to the Soviet moon in the sky triggered a fervent reexamination of the nation's educational system. The United States Commissioner of Education toured Soviet schools and reported that he saw a "total commitment to education".¹ Worried legislators met in urgent session to redress the balance that many felt had swung against American education. Critics warned that a satisfaction with the mediocre in educating our youth would imperil the nation. Stung by reports that the Soviets were producing more scientists and engineers than the United States, congress in 1958 passed the National Defense Education Act. It was a hodgepodge piece of legislation representing deliberate compromises, and it was labeled an emergency defense measure, not a permanent program of federal aid to

¹Ronald Steel, Federal Aid to Education (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1961), p. 3.

education as such.

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 authorizes something over one billion dollars in federal aid. In the swinging sweep of its ten titles it touches--and returns to touch again--every level of education, public and private, from the elementary school through the graduate.

Its billion dollars, though authorized for a dozen separate programs, have been authorized for the single purpose, that every young person, from the day he first enters school, should have an opportunity to develop his gifts to the fullest. This is the emphasis that gives the act its name, for it recognizes that in a free society the individual is the first line of defense.¹

In this pursuit of excellence for the individual, the act does not concern itself with how much bigger our schools should be or how they should be built, important though these matters are, but rather with the finding and encouraging of talent, with the improving of the ways and means of teaching, with the furthering of knowledge itself.

To assure the efficient use of federal funds thus to improve the quality of education, the act calls for responsible action at every level.

The act has ten titles. The first title sets forth general provisions. The others outline and authorize funds

¹"National Defense Education Act, 1958," School Life, October, 1958, p. 2.

for the various programs of federal aid. About three-fourths of the appropriated funds will be distributed as grants to the state educational agencies for strengthening instruction in elementary and secondary schools. The rest, will go to institutions of higher education.

The general purpose of each title includes:

Title I. General provisions--purpose and definition.

Title II. To increase opportunities for needy and qualified students to continue their education beyond high school by establishing loan funds at institutions of higher education.

Title III. To stimulate a nationwide effort to strengthen instruction in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages, the National Defense Education Act authorizes payments to states for the purpose of acquiring the needed laboratory and other special equipment.

Title IV. To increase the supply of well trained college or university level teachers through the award of fellowships, expansion and improvement of graduate school facilities, and wider geographical distribution of such facilities throughout the nation.

Title V. To provide financial assistance to the states to establish and maintain (1) a testing program in secondary schools to identify students with outstanding aptitudes and ability and (2) a program of

guidance and counseling in the public secondary school to encourage students to complete their secondary school education in preparation for their entrance into institutions of higher education and to enter such institutions.

Title VI. To strengthen instruction in foreign language insufficiently taught in this country and in related studies of the countries where these languages are used as determined by the commissioner. To seek more effective methods of teaching such languages; to develop specialized materials for use in teaching these languages; to provide advanced training in modern foreign language and in related field to individuals available for teaching the languages or for other public service.

Title VII. To encourage experimentation and research for more effective utilization of television, radio, motion pictures, and related media for educational purposes.

Title VIII. To alleviate the manpower shortage by assisting the states to provide through area vocational education programs training of less than college grade for youth, adults, and older persons, including instruction for apprentices, designed to fit them for useful employment as highly skilled technicians in recognized occupations requiring scientific knowledge, as determined by the state board for each state, in fields necessary for the national defense.

Title IX. The only part of the act not charged to the Office of Education, authorizes the National Science Foundation to establish a Science Information Center and a Science Information Council. The second will advise and consult with the first; and both will have one end in mind. Providing the scientist with information he needs, quickly and effectively.

Title X. To assist the states in improving and strengthening (1) the adequacy and reliability of educational statistics provided by state and local reports and records, and (2) the methods and techniques for collecting and processing educational data and disseminating information about the conditions and progress of education in the states.¹

Vocational Act of 1963

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 makes the post-high school technician programs under Title VIII of the National Defense Education Act permanent. This law represents an attempt to "retool" vocational education in order to teach modern skills. It is the first major revamping of Vocational Education since the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.

¹U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, The National Defense Education Act, (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1960)

In 1964, The National Defense Education Act was extended to June 30, 1968 with a broadened program. This program included teachers of "English, reading, history, and geography," teachers of "disadvantaged youth, librarians, and educational media specialists". Loans and grants to states for the purchase of equipment have been extended to materials used in the teaching of English, reading, history, geography, and civics.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Two major acts, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, although not education law per se, will have effects in the area of education.

Technically called the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the War on Poverty Bill passed the House of Representatives on August 8, 1964. The Senate, on August 11, 1964, passed by voice vote and sent to the White House the impressive \$947.5 million poverty bill which provides "exits from poverty", primarily through the doors of education.¹ One educational implication of this bill is found in Project Head Start.

Head Start is a Community Action Program funded under Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, Op.cit., p. 158.

The Head Start story began in the summer of 1965 as a program to help underprivileged pre-school children get ready for the fall term of first grade or kindergarten.

In Head Start, the pre-school children are usually chosen by the local Community Action Committee, the school system, or the Department of Public Aid. Other agencies, however, can also help in recruiting such as churches or other nonprofit groups which work with poverty programs. For the most part, the Head Start programs are set up in cooperation with a local school or school district.

Encouraging and easing the course of desegregation in public schools is the main object of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. There are two titles to be concerned. Title IV empowers the attorney general to initiate civil action against local school boards which deny equal rights to any young people. It provides that "no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origins, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance".¹

Under Title IX the Commissioner of Education is required to conduct a study to determine whether equal

¹Sidney W. Tiedt, Op.cit., p. 160.

opportunity to education is being denied because of race, color, religion, or national origins.

The Civil Rights Act, like the Economic Opportunity Act, utilizes education as a means to achieve its objectives. In the Economic Opportunity Act education is a weapon against poverty; in the Civil Rights Act it is the means of ensuring freedom and equal opportunity in our society.

The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965

The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 represents the largest single commitment by the federal government to strengthen and improve educational quality and opportunities in elementary and secondary schools across the nation. There are five titles included in this act.

Title I. Provides for federal assistance for local educational agencies for the education of children of low income families. Funds available to local school districts nationwide for this purpose have been estimated at more than a billion dollars.

Title II. Provides funds for textbooks, library resources and audio-visual aids. Estimated funds available nationwide will be \$100 million which will be distributed according to plans designed by each state.

Title III. Provides funds for supplementary education centers. In this area, since school

authorities are required to cooperate with other educational and cultural agencies in the community, anti-poverty committees will obviously become involved in a coordinating capacity. A wide range of activities may be carried out at education centers.

Title IV. A total of \$100 million will be available nationwide over the next five years for training facilities and educational research. Grants for programs to benefit public schools are available to institutions of higher education and to other non-profit organizations.

Title V. Strengthening State Departments of Education is a five year program aimed at improving educational planning, research, and the competency of personnel.¹

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was intended to supplement rather than to duplicate or replace other sources of financial assistance. Certain programs components developed under one or more titles of ESEA may therefore be eligible for support through other federal aid programs or for state or local assistance.

¹Thomas C. Jackson, The Local Challenge (Springfield, Illinois: Office of Economic Opportunity, March 1966), p. 1-5.

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION

Issues in Federal Aid

In spite of a plethora of federal aid for special purposes, a number of historical and governmental conditions have militated against significant federal participation in supporting the basic and fundamental programs of education at any level-elementary, secondary and higher.

First, there is a fear of political control. This fear relates to all governments, but it is accentuated when the federal government, because of its nationwide character, is brought into relationship with education.

Education from the outset has never been considered an ordinary function of the government. While historically no other nation has had a greater commitment to universal public education, there has been awareness that education must not be closely regimented and controlled. The fear is that it may degenerate into indoctrination, which is not education at all. From their earliest beginnings, the schools were given their own geographic areas, their own boards of control and a considerable degree of local autonomy. This has permitted public

schools to teach and investigate subjects which might, for the time being, run contrary to popular opinion or custom. It has kept them from partisan and political perversion. In states where independence was legally well established or the tradition of separateness deep, bureaucratic interference has been avoided. State governments under the guise of efficiency have increasingly invaded the autonomy of local districts through state controls relative to budgeting, purchasing, preaudit of accounts--to give the most common examples.

If local school authorities or even a state government violate the freedom of schools or colleges, so long as there are thousands of school districts and, more importantly, fifty state governments and hundreds of private colleges, the whole educational system of the nation cannot be subverted or prostituted. The idea is ingrained that to a considerable extent the present strength of America education lies in its decentralization, its diversity and local control, its closeness to the people. There has been awareness, too, that with the granting of funds goes some responsibility for control of expenditures. For these and other reasons there has been reluctance amounting to insurmountable opposition to the federal governments aiding education in a straightforward, rational manner.¹

¹The American Assembly, Op.cit., p. 163.

A second broad reason why the national government had been reluctantly turned to for support for education relates to our heritage of complete religious freedom and its ancillary concept. The most common interpretation by the courts of the first and fourteenth amendments to the constitution is that the federal government and the state governments are prohibited from making grants to religious bodies. Beginning with the Blair Bill's introduction into congress in the 1880's there have been many abortive attempts to obtain federal support of the general program of education in the public schools. The failure of proposed legislation to pass suggests an impasse. Any bill without aid to parochial schools cannot secure a majority in congress. Any bill with aid to parochial schools seems likely to be defeated by opponents from two different sources, those who would keep Washington's expenditures down, and those determined to separate church and state. Owing to mounting enrollments in parochial schools--now from 35 to 42 per cent in some of the great cities-- the impasse can only become more of a dilemma.¹

Third, in recent years desegregation has added to the aversion of the people in some states, often in those needing more money to turn to Washington for aid.

¹The American Assembly, Op.cit., p. 165.

For example, seven of the twenty senators and eighteen of the eighty-one representatives from the ten states singled out by the Committee for Economic Development as most in need of federal subsidy, voted against the National Education Act of 1958.¹

Congress, as well as the Supreme Court, has responsibility for upholding the Constitution. The Supreme Court has made it clear that segregated public facilities are not permissible. It is questionable that the federal government would supply funds to schools which are not open to all, regardless of race or color.

In addition to tradition and Constitution, there are the complicated problems of economic and political philosophy and machinery for distributing federal funds.

There still resides in the United States a deep-seated antipathy to government. The root of such attitudes, lies of course, in our history. This nation was born in protest against overbearing monarchy. In exploiting the great promise of the Industrial Revolution in a land of virgin resources, restrictions of any kind, especially from government were unwelcome. Then, too, the economic philosophy of laissez faire emphasized individualism and a limited role for government. Darwin's theories of natural selection and the survival of the fittest were

¹Ibid., p. 165.

later propagated as social and political axioms in the free enterprise economy of a lusty new America. As a part and outgrowth of all this came the idea that the best government was the least government. Such deep grained attitudes must still be reckoned with whenever a new role for the central government is suggested.

A formula for federal aid which could pass congress and would distribute funds equitably has not been found. There are many reasons for this. The states vary widely in their ability to meet their educational needs. Taxpayers in wealthy states are money ahead if they provide all their own public and higher education out of the state treasury and keep the federal tax dollars in Washington. Some of the more wealthy states are making modest efforts and could do much more to meet their own educational needs. Taxpayers in some states with low per capita income cannot, however, even if they would, provide satisfactory minimum programs, although they are making tremendous taxpayer effort.

Retrospect

The dramatic scientific achievements of the Russian's Sputnik in 1957, a rocket on the moon in 1959, and man's first voyage into space in 1961- jolted the American people into a realization that our scientific and technological pre-eminence could no longer be taken

for granted. This has led to a serious reevaluation not only of our school plant but of our whole educational system.

At the same time, other forces have been at work to challenge complacency about the traditional place of education in America. The dramatic increase in births that followed World War II has continued into the sixties, sending millions of new students into crowded and often inadequate schools. With this has come the need for new classrooms, new teachers, and new equipment from our elementary schools through our increasingly overstrained colleges and universities.

Along with these challenges, has come a mounting realization among Americans that the world is going through a period of revolutionary change of staggering scope and complexity. New nations have risen to challenge the position of the established powers, old beliefs and ideologies have tumbled, dragging governments with them. New forces and new ideals are at work, as far reaching in their impact as the scientific discoveries that are remaking the physical world.

Swept up by these forces, the American people have turned their attention to the schools and the preparation for the future that they are giving. This is as it should be, because education is bound to the life and ideals of all nations. The people look to education to help them

understand and master change, knowing that unless education is geared to the challenge of the future, an unprepared people will be mastered by, rather than the master of, events.

American education today is at a crossroads. The patterns of the past--the one-room schoolhouse, the "life adjustment" approach to studies, the emphasis on togetherness at the expense of scholarship, the suspicion of excellence--all of these have been tried in the crucible of the fast changing modern world and found wanting. The world is in rapid flux and demands of an entirely new nature are being placed upon Americans. If the nation is to assert its leadership and keep pace with a globe in which change rather than order has become the password, new techniques must replace outmoded forms.

The federal government brings a national point of view to education. The federal government has the ability to focus attention of the nation upon the problem of education and a more efficient way to finance research and development work of common value to all states. The federal governments' revenue potential is unhampered by overdependence upon property taxation or by interstate economic competition.

The forces at work at the national level are financing and providing for a continuing study of educational issues, searching for new ideas, initiating

and assisting in educational innovations, are acting as a clearing house. The vital work of these technicians, scholars, educators, and laymen has as its basic purpose the attempt to give advice, suggestions and support from the frontiers of knowledge to the state and local systems for use in improving the quality of education.

But there are inherent limitations to the effectiveness of federal action in the field of education. The federal government is farthest removed from the classroom where teaching and learning occur. Moreover, for the local board of education education is the only problem; for state government, education is the major problem; for the federal government, education is one of many problems. Perhaps for this reason federal action in the field of education has, in many instances, been incidental to other federal concerns as national defense, full employment, or elimination of poverty.

Clearly the federal government can contribute much to public education. Some improvements in American education can be achieved only by federal action, and some can be greatly advanced by federal cooperation. But many important qualities of the public schools require vigor state and local leadership that must be preserved in the emerging partnership.

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