INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: SIDNEY P. MARLAND

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Commissioner Marland's office, Office of Education, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

F: I'd like to start off, first of all, by just as a general question asking you how a superintendent of schools in Pittsburgh gets a grant of almost two and a half million dollars. I mean, what about you or what about Pittsburgh makes you so special?

M: You must have been speaking of the Ford Grant.

F: Right.

M: I would have to say that that Ford Grant . . . .

F: This in a way is your national emergence. I mean at Winnetka you had been, of course, noticeable, but at Pittsburgh you really became a national figure to deal with.

M: Well, this may be true. I hear what you're saying. I suppose that at the time I went to Pittsburgh I happened to be at the right place at the right time. This was a large city with the typical problems of big city education. I was sufficiently credible, I suppose, with the Foundation people who thought I had done some innovative work in Winnetka and other places, so that when I suggested a significant grant we received one . This was in the early days of confronting the big issues of inner city

education, and, indeed, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act hadn't yet been enacted. So that Ford anticipated what ultimately became law in Title I, ESEA, and tested out some of the basic ideas concerning compensatory education in Pittsburgh. As it happened, I was there. But I think it was more likely that it was Pittsburgh that they were shooting for rather than for me, because it was a big city but still small enough to be responsive and manageable. Furthermore, it had a lively board of education. It was a very dedicated board of education. So that these coincidences, I think, were more important in attracting Ford's attention than the coincidence that I was the superintendent of schools.

F: Had you known Johnson prior to this time?

M: No. I had not known the President until I was invited to serve on one of his advisory committees.

F: Well, now, it was just shortly after that grant was announced that you were named as a member of the National Advisory Council to OEO. How did that come about?

M: Well, let me see. I remember I had a telephone call in my office in Pittsburgh, and my secretary came in and said, "Mr. Joseph Califano wants to speak to you." I said, "Who is he?" And she said, "I think he's in Washington. It's a long distance call." I said, "Well, I guess I better take it." So indeed it was Mr. Califano, and he, speaking for the White House of course, said that they would like me to serve on I believe the official title was the Presidential Advisory Council for the Office of Economic Opportunity. That was it.

F: Any idea where they got hold of you?

M: I suppose there were two of three things that were happening then in Pittsburgh that had some relevance to OEO and its view of itself and its mission. For example, with this very Ford Foundation grant we had started some work in what we called pre-primary education. This was for the three and four year olds in inner city schools. And not long after that I met with Sarge Shriver, then the director of OEO--

F: And you hadn't known Shriver previously, either?

M: No, no. I told him about our pre-primary program, and of course he jumped at the concept and thought it was great. It seemed to fit the OEO model, and he said, "I even have a name for it: Head Start." So that was where the OEO became interested in the Head Start idea, or at least this was one of the sources. There were other sources I'm sure.

F: I'm very interested in this and how Head Start gets started. Just what had you done now, with thinking in the Head Start direction?

M: We had reached some conclusions that were more intuitive than scientific at that point. I'm thinking now about the years 1963 and 1964 in Pittsburgh.

F: Yes.

M: Because of good teachers and good principals in Pittsburgh, encouraged by thoughtful advisers, we felt that it was worth a try to reach the disadvantaged child earlier than others, at age three. Of course this was to some people heresy; the child wasn't ready for any kind of systematic exposure to learning. But we were not considering formal learning.

F: Was this at any cultural or economic level, or was this every kid?

M: No, this program was clearly aimed at the disadvantaged child. We were trying to make up for the deficiencies in that child's environment, deficiencies resulting from economic difficulties, from a mixed-up home in many cases, from a lack of the cultural resources that were appropriate to a learning foundation. And, indeed, we did start working with such children.

One of the other features of our program at that time, which I think may be useful for the record, is that we began to use paraprofessionals, people from the communities whom we trained. At that time the institution we called upon to help train the paraprofessionals was Carnegie Tech, now called Carnegie-Mellon. We made an arrangement with Carnegie Tech to take on, in that first cohort, I think it was seventy-five paraprofessionals. They were mostly young women, a few young men, with high school diplomas on the whole but not much beyond that in the way of formal education. They, themselves, were poor, but they were concerned and wise people selected from the neighborhood, mostly the minority neighborhood, now called the black community. We gave them an intensive program in early childhood education over at Carnegie. Then we named them teacher aides to work in what came later under OEO to be called the Head Start program. We called it the pre-primary program.

I think that two things may have been noteworthy in this initiative. One, the fact that we were using paraprofessionals, which was very uncommon at that time. In fact, it was so uncommon as to generate a considerable issue in terms of guarded positions taken by teacher organizations. A second noteworthy item was the fact that we

were dealing systematically with three and four year olds for as much as a full day year round. It was not always a full day for all children; some of them were in attendance half days, some of them full days. But it was not simply a summer program, as later many of the Head Start programs unfortunately came to be.

We early found that we had a new kind of relationship with children. The early measures on this, even after the first year or so, showed significant gains in the child's readiness for school. We didn't try to teach them to read at age three, and we didn't try to teach them to do arithmetic or undertake any other academic learning. But we tried to bring the child into a social environment where he was secure, where he was happy, where he had some health attention, where he had some nutrition attention, and where the family, particularly the mother, became an intimate part of the school. As it happened, in order for the child to be admitted the mothers had to spend a half-day a week in the program, and many of them were working mothers. They did indeed sacrifice that working time, and many of them were domestics for whom the sacrifice of half-day's earning was real.

F: Did you do anything to kind of ease their intrusion into the program?

M: Yes, there were orientation programs for the mothers. The half-day was partly orientation of them in child care principles, and other parts of the period were devoted to just being in the school working with their children, being present, and of course working with the teachers to get a different feeling for school altogether. By that I mean instead of school being a forbidding place, a hostile place, a place where people were rejected, it was offered as a warm place,

a cordial place. It was a place where they saw they were part of the system. This was good for parents; it was good for the children. It was especially good for teachers.

F: This was downright revolutionary at the time. Do you get a kind of quiet pleasure out of the fact that it's almost taken for granted now?

M: Yes, although by no means would I want to imply that we in Pittsburgh, or I as an individual, were in any way exclusive in what we were doing. There were good programs like this going on in New York City under Martin Deutsch, a great scholar, a great psychologist, working in early childhood education with children of age three and four. We did link hands with Marty Deutsch in Pittsburgh so as to exchange data, exchange philosophy, exchange our gradually gathering experience. So that at least Deutsch, and others, were part of this. But I do take some very real satisfaction in the belief that we were part of this. But I do take some very real satisfaction in the belief that we were part of that early wave.

F: Let's set this in context for a moment. In general, in 1963-1964 the feeling was that six was just about, or maybe five, when you began to get educable. You're actually stating a new thesis that a kid can learn much earlier than people think he can.

M: Yes. This is true, and I think that it depends on what you call learning. Much of the learning is social. Much of it had to do with simply helping the child adjust to a group situation, to respond to leadership of others, to be respectful of the rights of others and then begin to develop a vocabulary. I remember much to my shock

at the time, there was a four year old child who didn't know the meaning or name of the color red. Now red is such a wonderful thing; red is such an exciting, beautiful substance and feeling, for a four-year old child to be aware of. Yet there were children at age four and five in that situation who had not learned what red was, or blue or yellow.

We gradually became aware of these kinds of deficits and realized the children could learn at age three and four, and I suspect earlier. Of course out of that demonstration has come things like Sesame Street for the two and three and four year old child, and certainly out of it has come the very substantial work of a number of scholars. Of course Head Start has continued, with effect. But that was, I guess, the first, at least one of the first moves we made with that Ford Foundation money and it very likely did call attention to Pittsburgh and therefore to me. That could have been why I was called to Washington that first time. I think the first job I had, out of several, was the OEO Advisory Council.

F: When Califano called you, what did he give you in the way of a commission, as well as an invitation?

M: In the way of a commission?

F: I mean what did he say you'd be doing?

M: I think that it was probably pretty brief and informal at that time. I doubt that there was any substantial statement of duties. He said, "Would you join with this council, be a member of this council? If so, we will follow this up with a letter, and then

you'll be hearing from Sarge Shriver." That was about the way it worked, and I doubt that we ever had very much of a formal statement. Those were the early days of advisory committees and council, and I'm afraid they're much more elaborate now and much more regulated. I'm not sure advisory committees are any better for it, but they are more formal.

F: Did the council come together periodically, or on call, or how?

M: Quite regularly, on call. I would say that in those years we were convened by Shriver at least quarterly, and maybe a little more often, particularly with any special new activity. But at least quarterly. We met over in Shriver's offices with his top staff.

F: Did he sit in on most of them?

M: Yes. In fact he conducted most of the meetings, I would guess. We didn't have an executive secretary, as many such councils do now.

F: Were they public school types, or were they across the board?

M: Very much across the board. Some of the names of those people escape me now, but, for example, Dr. Spock was a member of that group as was Hubert Humphrey. There was a very exciting Chicano woman, who at that time would not have been called a Chicano; that would have been a slur. She was a Mexican-American woman; her name was Garcia, from Texas. There was an Indian leader from Oklahoma, I believe, a businessman. There were blacks; there was one of the principal editors of Ebony magazine. It was across the board; Mrs. Robert McNamara served on the Council, as did economist J. Kenneth Galbraith.

F: That was Mrs. Hector Garcia?

M: It could well be, I just don't know.

F: Did you aim at the ethnically disadvantaged, or were you talking about all kinds of disadvantaged types?

M: Well, of course the OEO mandate was to reach all disadvantaged people, but clearly we were more than ordinarily concerned with racial minorities. I think that this is true to this day, that while our programs for the disadvantaged aim toward all the disadvantaged people economically, that we are especially concerned with the blacks and Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, and Indians.

F: Well now, six months later you're on the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children. Is that an overlap situation?

M: I protested that, as I remember, at the time. I think I said something to the effect, "Isn't this going to be kind of more of Marland than you need on something that is quite similar?" Frank Keppel was commissioner at that time, and it was he, I believe, who invited me to serve on that one. And, no, he felt that there was a desirable feature in having an implication of liaison between the two commissions. I remember calling attention to it, and I think I protested mildly. But as I've generally done if I've had a call from a responsible person in Washington to take on a job, I guess I've generally tried to do it.

F: Was this basically a White House appointment, or was it a Keppel appointment?

M: No, it was a White House appointment. In fact, I still have in the attic up in the farm a very lovely commission--like that one over there from President Nixon naming me to these councils--signed by President Johnson.

F: Did you see President Johnson at all in these first two appointments? Did he come around?

M: Oh, yes. He didn't come around to us; we went around to him, but we certainly got together. I think it's important for the record that he did call us to him fairly regularly. It was not uncommon for either of these commissions, the OEO Commission or the one that was called the Commission for the Education of the Disadvantaged, to sit with the President in the Cabinet Room and periodically brief him as to where we were and, I might add, to receive marching orders from him from time to time.

F: I was going to ask, did he probe you, or did he lecture you?

M: He did both, quite skillfully I would say. He spoke to us generally quite gently, quite as a fellow teacher, as he, I think often felt he was. Rarely do I recall him behaving with abruptness or excessive force, but I do remember him dealing with these issues with deep emotion.

F: You had the feeling he had a grasp of what you were worrying about?

M: Yes, I don't have any doubt about that. He wanted to be informed of what was happening in education for the disadvantaged, whether it was OEO or whether it was the Office of Education. And he did keep

himself quite well informed. At that time his principal education assistant was . . .

F: Was that Doug Cater?

M: Doug Cater. And Doug Cater was constantly in close touch with both of these commissions. Now it happened that the second one, the one for the disadvantaged, did have a part-time staff director, and he worked actively for the commission in terms of conducting studies, gathering data, and working with the Office of Education on assembling the materials for us to read. So that we were a little more systematically organized, I guess, under the second commission, and perhaps used differently. I think in the case of the OEO group it was Sarge Shriver's style to bring us in and use us as a sounding board, rather than a policy-making body.

F: He kind of bounced ideas off you?

M: Yes. He did it very well, and I think that he got ideas from us. I think that another item which I remember suggesting, or at least helping him develop, was what turned out to be Upward Bound. There again it was the Pittsburgh schools in collaboration with the Carnegie Institute, now Carnegie-Mellon. Jake Warner, the president of Carnegie Institute, called me one day--we were just across the street from each other, Board of Education Building and Carnegie-Mellon. He said, "Come on over, I'd like to buy you lunch and talk with you." So we had lunch, and he said, "What can Carnegie-Mellon do as a university to help you with the city school problems?" We thought a while, and I said, "Jake, why not see to it that some of

the young people, many of them poor and black"--I would have said Negro in those days--"have an opportunity to learn what a college is all about under very beneficial conditions while they're still in high school, particularly to motivate them, and particularly to take the people who might otherwise be losers and move them into a sequence of experiences that you can provide here at the university that we can't possibly provide in the public school system."

It turned out that we did just that. We started off with a summer program, identifying young people in high school at their junior year whom we felt to be promising and yet without very good academic records. They would not have been college material conventionally, but somebody somewhere, like a good teacher or a good counselor or a good principal, said, "I think that Mary can make it. I think that Harry can make it." This was our basis for selection, almost all visceral feelings, and we began to assemble them. The first year there were thirty, as I remember, and they worked with the faculty at Carnegie-Mellon, with sensitive teachers there. Some of our Pittsburgh Schools faculty joined the Carnegie-Mellon group, and I'm sure I gave an accounting of this activity early to the people in the OEO Commission. It was not long after that that Upward Bound became a reality. This is now an ongoing program, which, incidentally has been moved over to the Office of Education from OEO. That's where it started.

While you're speaking of the way things happen in OEO, I remember--I think this was even on tape as I look back. Maybe it's still on tape somewhere in the bowels of the OEO archives,

all our meetings were. I remember expounding for some time on the theory of what OEO should be, and I wasn't very popular. I used a military analogy and said that OEO should be like the cavalry. They should be fast-moving, risk-taking, adventuresome. They should reach out and probe--I used the term "fix the enemy's flanks"--advance under cover of darkness or wherever, test out the frontier, see where the real enemy is, pin him down until the infantry and the artillery can move up, the infantry and the artillery being the more conventional forms of federal government including education. They should be the unconventional form of governmental trail-blazing, and they shouldn't operate programs.

Well, when I said they shouldn't operate programs, that immediately made me a sourpuss for that group, because they wanted to be not only the cavalry, but from time to time they wanted to be the infantry and the artillery and the Air Force too. But nonetheless, that was one of the early debates we had. I remember it well, and oddly enough I still agree with that position, and I think that history has unfolded a position confirming something like that position which I advised.

F: Now then, the stereotype of a commissioner of education and a man in your position is one who's come up through the professional education school. You've got a strong grounding in English, as I recall.

M: I taught English.

F: Yes. How does a professor of English, which is looked upon as a little esoteric and even limp-wristed, move into the administrative end?

M: I would guess that the fact that I was an English teacher and feel

a certain amount of discipline about communication, whether it's for literary purposes or for expository purposes, could very well have contributed to my usefulness as an administrator. A man or woman in administration has to write a great deal, and has to speak a great deal. He or she has to communicate with colleagues and the public a great deal, in whatever form. I would guess that whatever discipline I may have acquired as an English teacher contributed to my usefulness as an administrator, but there is no normal track for an administrator of education. The history has been that of a teacher, presumably a successful teacher, who has advanced to a larger responsibility than the classroom. I do hold that administrators should be good teachers.

F: Yes.

M: Whether it's English, or biology, or French, or physical education.

F: You do one thing well that not all administrators do, and that is you articulate and verbalize well; therefore, you communicate well, which of course is a place where [some administrators] break down. I wondered if you felt that it is sort of a source of strength for you.

M: I think it is; I think it is. I would add that I did--

F: I'm not trying to get you to be immodest.

M: No, I'm quite willing to say that my own training as a high school teacher of English, and my insistence upon good quality work from students had a good effect. To this day, I'm afraid, it is a source of dismay to my associates sometimes. I'll bounce materials back that came to me for signing and say, "Look, this can be better written. Try again."

F: Among other things, you're editor-in-chief around here?

M: Yes, somebody has to be, and many people are, in this office, right now. But I still get lengthy memoranda sometimes intended for wide dissemination that could be written in a page instead of four pages. There's no need for verbosity in government communications.

F: Did Mrs. Johnson come around to any of these early meetings?

M: I remember on at least two or three occasions when we were called to the White House to report that following our business session with the President, she would invite us to I think it was the Red Room or the Rose Room for tea. This happened on several occasions. She was most gracious.

F: Were they strictly social, or did you talk business?

M: Social, that is, largely social, and it was not unlikely that at that time there might have been another visitor there whom she wanted us to meet, someone who had been doing business with her. I remember on one occasion--oh, who was it? A distinguished black woman was her guest, and she invited us in to tea with this lady. It could have been Bennetta Washington, wife of the present mayor, I'm not sure, but a woman of distinction. [They were] largely social, yes, largely social.

F: In that same summer of 1965 you were vice chairman of the White House Conference on Education under John Gardner.

M: That's right.

F: I presume you'd worked with Gardner earlier.

M: Well, I'm losing track of my dates here. Maybe you have them in better hand than I do. Have you yet caught up with the task force, the Gardner Task Force?

F: No.

M: I think the Gardner Task Force started in late 1963 or early 1964. I had worked as a member of that task force with John Gardner very closely, which of course ultimately led in large part to the creation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

F: Which was in 1964?

M: That was 1964 that that went up. So if we're speaking of the White House Conference in 1965, the answer to your question is yes. I had known John Gardner, worked very closely with him for a year or two by the time of that White House Conference.

F: Do you think he named you as vice chairman, or do you think by this time you'd come to Johnson's attention sufficiently?

M: I haven't any idea. I just don't have any idea. I think they probably wanted at least to have the symbolism of a conventional school man distinct from John Gardner, who was anything but a conventional school man. He was at that time a good foundation executive of extraordinary dimension, as well as a statesman in the making.

F: Did Gardner run a tight meeting?

M: Very, a very disciplined meeting. He would expect members to have performed their homework thoroughly, and he would expect us to contribute to each other's growth, such as the preparation of papers. I remember struggling over three or four papers that he

bluntly and specifically assigned to me. I still have some of those papers back in the files, and I expect that somewhere their imprint flows in some of the final report materials from the Gardner Task Force. Of course, that task force was secret up until the time of the opening of the Johnson Library. It was a secret that gradually began to leak out, because over the years people would say, "Tell us about your work on the Gardner Task Force." I would have to grin and say, "What task force?" President Johnson chose not to release that report, and therefore, of course, not to identify the members of the task force. But it did become generally known who served on the task force. That was a very distinguished group of people: Zacharias from M.I.T., Father Hesburgh, Frank Keppel, John Coleman, Steven Wright and other giants.

F: Was there any great division in the task force, or did you pretty well see things together? I'm sure you had differences of degree and so forth, but there was no factionalism?

M: I generally argue with Professor Zacharias on almost any issue, and he and I would tend to take opposite sides on a number of things. But broadly speaking there was good consensus in the task force, and Zach and I generally reconciled our differences.

F: Did this White House Conference sort of act as a possibility for emergence of what the task force had been up to? Sort of surfacing?

M: I think that it wasn't entirely coincidental, but I think that the White House Conference was a separate and distinct entity in itself. I think that undoubtedly there was an overlay of some influence

because of John Gardner's very real presence in planning and developing the task force, and, a year later, in planning and developing the White House Conference. But I think that they served two different purposes. Although, while I have perhaps never put my mind to it, one could say that a shrewd president would encourage a White House Conference at a time when he was interested in advancing very substantial legislation, which he did in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. So I suppose that it wasn't entirely coincidental that the findings of the task force emerged implicitly in the White House Conference, which in turn was a foundation for the massive legislation that LBJ launched on education.

F: I would gather, then, that the task force operates primarily sub rosa, whereas the conference does have a certain outward pressure.

M: Yes. And of course the conference was consciously and deliberately very open and engaged many, many people.

F: Did you consciously go after the minority groups?

M: Yes, yes. I'm trying to think of some of the participants in that White House Conference. Whitney Young was there I'm quite sure, Ken Clark I'm sure was there, with major papers on which they took positions for the White House Conference. Yes, it was consciously aimed at the involvement of minority spokesmen. At that time, you must remember that we were just beginning to make some significant moves in the direction of recognizing the problems of minorities. The civil rights movement was vigorously in motion. Schools were trying to respond to that, and for heavens sake still are. But this was early on in the cycle of intensifying our concerns for the poor and the minorities.

F: Do you have a feeling that a conference like this is more than just window dressing, that it is viable in the sense of getting things like Head Start and urban education before the public?

M: Yes, I'm sure it is. I can even reflect from the vantage point of the present time upon the White House Conference on Children, and following that the White House Conference on Youth. Those two conferences were held within the past year. And very clearly, right now at this moment, in the Office of Education we're threading through all of the work of those two very important White House conferences to pick up the issues and to attempt to move forward on those things that those conferences recommended.

For example, a quick illustration but one that is quite meaningful, the White House Conference on Youth held in Estes Park came to the conclusion that marijuana should be legalized. That's a very serious proposition. At this moment, this office is wrestling with the issue of where our stand will be on that subject, where we have some of the ablest people in the United States on the question of drug abuse trying to help us thread through that position and take our own position for policy development here. We don't know the answer yet, but you can be sure that the White House Conference raised the issue in such a way that we now have to answer it, to the extent that education influences that ultimate policy. So I could cite dozens of instances such as that to say to you, yes, the existence of a White House conference causes people to take things seriously in government. That includes Congress.

F: Shortly after this White House conference Gardner became secretary of HEW. Did you feel that gave you sort of a plus arrangement since he was fresh from the conference and the task force, or is that so administrated that it's almost divorced from these behind the scenes workings?

M: I think that on his own merits John Gardner is a very great American, and I think that the President was very wise to call upon him to perform these jobs: a), the task force; b), the White House Conference. Even if he hadn't performed those two tasks he would have been a very prominent American and well suited to the Cabinet post heading HEW. But again, I am quite sure that there was a degree of cause-effect relationship there, that he had become more prominent, even, than he was through these works, and that it led very logically to his appointment as Secretary, HEW.

F: I won't put you on the spot by asking you to politic, but you are commissioner of education under a Republican administration Did you ever have any feeling in these Johnson years that your political viewpoints were a matter of concern to the administration, or was it that they were trying to get the best men possible for education?

M: I think the latter. I happen to be an independent, as far as any formal politics are concerned. I think I behave a little bit more Republican than I do Democrat, but that's merely--

F: That's the Democrat's fault, huh?

M: Well, it's just my way of thinking and behaving, but I'm neither officially. But at no time did I ever see any interest in that

subject during the Johnson Administration during the time that I worked at these numerous opportunities to serve the government. My politics, if any, did not become a question.

F: You were never called upon saying, "Look, you've had this relationship with this administration; therefore, now what are you going to do for the party?"

M: Such as, in terms of speech making or giving money?

F: Yes.

M: No. At no time did this come up.

F: They took you strictly as an educator?

M: I think so.

F: Yes. You were reappointed to the Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity in 1967.

M: You really have the record on me, don't you?

F: Well, I try to!

M: Yes, I was. I questioned that at the time very seriously with Sarge Shriver. Because I felt that I had occupied enough key posts of this kind in Washington, and I also was a very busy superintendent of schools in Pittsburgh and frankly didn't have the time to do it.

F: You must have met yourself coming back a few times, to use the vernacular.

M: Well, it was thick. It was thick. I got a little bit more than I needed in the way of Washington tasks, opportunities. So I did argue this with Sarge and said I would like to be passed over on the

second reappointment. There were only two as I remember. I think Mrs. McNamara and I were the only carry-over members for the second one. He pressed me and finally convinced me that I was being carried over for the purpose, that they did want a school man to be a source of continuity within the task force. Even at that time I remember writing to him, I expect the letter is around somewhere, saying that, "I have been a kind of stormy petrel in your committee, and therefore I'll get off your back and stop criticizing OEO." Well, he made some nice words that that's why he wanted me there. It's hard to back off from that sort of thing. Other than that I don't know what the reason was for my reappointment. I did continue to serve, and by that time the council had become considerably more organized under, oh, the Chicago attorney . . . .

F: Heinaman?

M: No, the chairman of the council.

F: We can figure that out.

M: Well, a very prominent Chicago lawyer. He insisted on a staff and executive services and so on, and the Council became considerably more organized. At that point we had a full time executive secretary and two or three staff members. But by that time I think that Sarge himself had begun to look elsewhere for pursuit of his interests, and I guess I would say that I was not a particularly active member of the council in that second tour. I was so busy with other things, like the Council on the Disadvantaged and other work, including my duties in Pittsburgh, that I was a fairly inactive member of the council

the second time.

F: Did you get the feeling that Johnson was committed to these programs; they weren't just sort of window dressing?

M: Yes, I do. I don't think that he would have given the time that he did personally to these groups unless he believed in them. He was much too busy a man to sit, say for an hour, in the Cabinet Room and listen to us and coach us and to push us, except that he believed in the process. In fact, I think that Title I of ESEA was the largest piece of educational law ever enacted. It would not have materialized without LBJ's personal attention.

F: Did you have any feeling--you know [there is] one group of interviews that has now been released in which Johnson is purported to have said, "All those OEO fellows are disloyal." Do you think that holds up?

M: Mr. Johnson said that?

F: Yes.

M: No, I don't think that at all. I saw great acts of loyalty performed by men in OEO at various levels of rank and responsibility.

F: Did you ever have any feeling that Sarge Shriver had any problems from being a Kennedy in-law in the Johnson Administration?

M: It wouldn't surprise me if he had them, but they didn't show in his work that I could see.

F: And he was there and present all the time?

M: He certainly was. I might add that Vice President Humphrey was a very active participant in our work in OEO at that time. He frequently came to our meetings and spent a lot of time there.

F: There's a feeling, in some circles of course, that HEW is unmanageable.

Is this just kind of a popular canard that's gotten out? I mean, has it taken in more than it can digest?

M: One would have to say that HEW is only manageable to the degree that a man can be the head of it and be its principal manager. As far as I'm concerned, Elliot Richardson is the manager of HEW as secretary, and he is well able to manage HEW. It is being managed, I can assure you.

F: Do you find any essential difference between him and Wilbur Cohen?

M: Yes. They are very different individuals. They are both very effective human beings, very skillful human beings. I would see Elliot Richardson as a person with the attorney's skill to analyze, to digest, to recall, to communicate the thrust of an idea and to see the hole in the doughnut instantly. He has fantastic recall, and he has great intellectual capacity. I see Wilbur Cohen as a different kind of leader, one with charisma, one with great sensitivity and compassion, understanding, a low keyed type of leadership direction. This is not to say Secretary Richardson doesn't have many of these same qualities, but they are quite different human beings. I would say that while I didn't work under Wilbur Cohen's leadership, observing him as a friend and knowing him now as a friend I would view him as a very different kind of person, and perhaps one who would not aspire to be the complete manager of this vast HEW enterprise as a lifetime job.

F: I would presume that you would agree that education did make some great strides in the sixties.

M: No question about it. I feel it did, and I feel that the legislation to begin with was a tremendous breakthrough.

F: Do you think the legislation was well thought out, or is it subject to the charge of too much too quickly?

M: The legislation was well thought out. But there should have been a period of model building, of developmental work, of placing programs under the scrutiny of testing and evaluation and validation before we sweepingly began to spend money without the discipline of the models as to what might work. I'm afraid that in the early years of ESEA money was spent to just do more of the same, and it did not produce significant differences.

F: I know a lot of school superintendents, some of whom are just somewhere between lost and mystified by the multiplicity of possibilities. They can't grasp them, and they may be starving in some programs in the sight of plenty. Is this something you can overcome?

M: Yes. President Nixon's program for revenue sharing speaks to this issue. It consolidates the many, many grants which, you're quite right, bewilder and exasperate and frustrate local school administrators. We hope to consolidate these programs into a much simpler form of delivery. And of course it means consolidating many laws and authorities that we have. But that is precisely what this administration speaks of when it speaks of special educational revenue sharing.

F: Do you have a feeling that you maybe have to go through that

bewildering period before you can move on to a consolidation basis? Or is this just a case of well-meaning people who did just shove out a lot of things that maybe were overdue--maybe were not overdue? But at any rate, they did it without giving any kind of thought to the general digestibility of these programs?

M: I don't think I wholly understand your question, but if it says the legislation came too fast, I'd say no. The Office of Education, however, would have been wise, as we're trying to be now, to have taken a year or two before delivering the money so as to develop more dependable systems and models for the use of the new federal funds. The conditions were tremendously imperative at that time: "Get that money out," and I certainly wanted it out. I was a school superintendent waiting for that money. I didn't want to wait for model building; I didn't want to wait for experimentation; I didn't want to wait for validation; I wanted dough! But I would have to say that what we're doing now in some of our new programs, career education, renewal, education of the handicapped, will go out in what I hope will be more tested and reliable ways that will lead to change more constructively as the money follows the tests and demonstrations.

F: Anything else we ought to talk about, Mr. Commissioner?

M: Well, just for the record, I will say again as I have said before, that President Johnson in my judgment, and I speak now as a member of this administration, deserves to be called the Great Education President.

F: That's what he'd like to be called!

M: And I like to call him that.

F: Do you think he really did have the commitment and the vision?

M: Oh, I do. I do indeed.

F: Thank you.

M: Thank you.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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