

FOR RELEASE AFTER 9:30 A. M.
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 1967

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON AT BEGINNING OF
"ADVENTURE IN LEARNING" TRIP AND SHOWING OF "PANCHO"
FILM, THE WHITE HOUSE

Friends:

Today is an important one for me: important because of the premiere we will soon be seeing. But it is important also because it marks the beginning of a journey I am taking to some of the schoolrooms of this country -- a journey that will take me during the next three days to West Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

The map shows that this area -- Appalachia -- lies deep in the heart of the nation. It is no less deep in the heart and the thoughts of the President.

The map shows that Appalachia is 1200 miles long and 250 miles wide and some call it poor, but it should be measured, not in its shortage of material goods, but in its wealth of promise for the nation.

No one knows that promise better than the teachers of Appalachia for the great transformation of the region is taking place in their schoolrooms. Schools don't close their doors at 3:30 any more. Late into the night they are beaconstones to the community -- teaching and enriching the lives of the people of all ages.

In visiting some of the classrooms of these three states, I will be glimpsing classrooms in every state where we are attacking old problems in new ways.

There is a great new fever for learning in this country, and a greater commitment by government to wipe out illiteracy than ever before. When you read the statistics in Washington, they are too hard to comprehend. By visiting the classroom, I can better understand the impact of one overwhelming statistic: one third of our people are in school.

Our journey starts in this room this morning with one small boy. His name is Pancho and he is a movie star. He has come all the way from California to be here.

Pancho Mansera is six years old. You will see in this film, as the President and I have seen, that Pancho is more than a movie star. He is one of thousands of children, who, because of Head Start, are getting a fair start in school, instead of being daily dulled by problems too big for a child to master alone.

You in this room are literally the producers of this show. With thousands of other Head Start workers and volunteers, you have made the dramatic success story possible.

No one more than you who work in the 10,000 Head Start Centers throughout the country better understands the deeper meaning of this program for pre-school children. You have made the difference between what is and what might have been

As you have discovered, Head Start is many things. It is a child looking for a chance to be somebody. It is his parents determined that he shall have that chance. It is a teacher and a teacher's aide, trained and caring, guiding the child's first steps on the road to knowledge; a doctor and a nurse, making sure his body is sturdy; a social worker showing the parents and child to sources of help.

Head Start is a crusade of individuals and organizations with special skills, and very special dedication, and we pay tribute to them all for all they have done. They will have the satisfaction of seeing the results of their efforts as demonstrated by one dramatic Head Start story.

It shows that Head Start tackles the problem at the most crucial age -- when the difference for good or ill can be made, when the most can be done, when the investment in time and money brings the most telling results. Ideally, we would hope that Head Start could be applied for longer and to more children. That is why the President has proposed that the programs be extended to three-year olds and that there must be "follow-through" in the early grades of school. But because you can't do everything, would you do nothing? I don't think Pancho would agree.

Pancho, thank you for coming to the White House to see a movie called "Pancho." To have a movie named for you is quite an honor even for a movie star, you know. I have never heard of a movie called "Spencer," or "Marlon," or "Kirk." But I think you especially deserve the honor for, as a star, you cast a bright light of promise for us all.

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