P.S. to the NEWS

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FEDERAL SPENDING FOR EDUCATION

One of the evidences that our society has become more materialistic than idealistic is the general presumption that all problems can be solved by spending more money. Nowhere is this delusion so rampant as in the field of education. Between 1961 and 1972, enrollments in public elementary and secondary schools increased 26 percent, while school spending increased a tremendous 186 percent. Yet, the quality of education has steadily deteriorated.

In 1965, the spending syndrome took a giant leap forward when Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It was supposedly designed to create programs for the educationally disadvantaged, but it quickly became nothing but a poverty program to redistribute the wealth. The formula for distributing funds is based entirely on the income of the children's parents.

Thus, the Federal educators attempt to determine how well Johnny can read simply by asking how much money his father makes. Johnny's answer supposedly determines his reading level, and his level of educational advantage or disadvantage. But much worse, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act marked the first major Federal involvement in and control of public education in the United States.

Under this law, the U.S. Commissioner of Education has spent more than $13 billion. Funds are distributed to state and local education agencies provided, of course, that they comply with Federal controls including counseling, psychological testing, and experimentation on our children.

The American Institute for Research recently made an evaluation

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which reported that participants in Federal education programs gained less than non-participants, and that Federal expenditures failed to result in any improvement in reading or other cognitive skills.

The American Institute for Research reports that no positive relationship was discovered between Title One project expenditures and cognitive benefits. In the light of this evidence, one would expect those concerned with education to question further Federal involvement in education in general, and E.S.E.A. in particular. Instead, the educationists are presently pushing for a simple extension of E.S.E.A. for another five years.

There is an old motto which asks the question: "Are you working on the solution, or are you part of the problem?" In education, Federal spending is not only not working on the solution, but it is part of the problem.

Congressman Earl Landgrebe has devised a most sensible solution. He has introduced the Freer Schools Act which would phase out Federal intervention in primary and secondary schools over a four-year period. During the phase-out period, group therapy and sensitivity training would be prohibited, and all experimental programs would require parental consent.

Congressman Landgrebe's bill will mean local control, decentralized schools, and freedom from Federal interference. The result will be a better education for all our children.

Federal funding must inevitably result in more Federal control. We can't have it both ways, and the American people are kidding themselves when they think they can get huge checks from Washington without controls.

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