

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

File

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White House Task Force on Education

Interview with Homer Babbidge by Gil Schulkind and
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Dr. Babbidge indicated that a number of compromises were necessarily made in developing the report of the Committee on Mission and Organization in 1961. In addition, the recommendations were bound to be somewhat conservative because the environment was not suitable for drastic change. Among the most significant deviations from Babbidge's own views were the following:

1. He would have made a much stronger plea for the necessity to draw a clear and complete distinction between higher education and elementary and secondary.
2. He would have preferred to eliminate from the Office's mission the provision of consultative services but they were faced with the reality of persons on the payroll who had to be employed somehow.
3. He would have favored the development of in-house research capability which is merely hinted at in the report.
4. He would not favor a Bureau for International Education and thinks that the recent IEA proposal for a staff office to coordinate functions spread throughout the Office makes more sense.
5. The use of advisory committees had permitted the Office to abdicate from some of its responsibilities and it had not developed a staff capacity to evaluate proposals.
6. He saw the possibility for more field utilization, especially in higher education.
7. Vocational Education should have been split up but the pressures were too great.
8. There were a number of problems with HEW, especially in regard to statistics and data processing.

Babbidge concurred in the opinion that adult education is likely to be of increasing significance. However, he would prefer to organize such programs within the basic framework of higher education or elementary and secondary education.

His opinions on key personnel generally support those which we have developed from other sources. He thought that certain personnel shifts were essential in order to make the organization move effectively.

He commented on the use of ad hoc procedures and assignments as in the case of NDEA implementation. While this approach was successful in that case and might be required for the new Act, he stressed that a very high price would be paid in the failure to develop staff capability.

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