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## BACKGROUND PAPER ON OFFICE OF EDUCATION

### Growth in OE Responsibilities

The growth of responsibilities of the Office of Education over the past five years has been unprecedented. It marks not just an expansion of the Federal role in education, but the beginning of an entirely different relationship between the Federal Government and the educational community.

Between 1961 and 1966, programs administered by the Office will expand from \$.5 billion to \$3.6 billion, more than 570%.

In 1961 the Office administered four major programs of the State plan-formula grant type totaling \$400 million; in 1966 there are eight such programs already in existence and another five in pending legislation totaling \$2,570 million.

In 1961 the Office administered three major programs requiring individual project-by-project decision making totaling \$90 million; in 1966 there are 10 such programs under existing legislation and another five under pending legislation totaling \$970 million.

In addition to administering such an increasingly large portion of the Federal budget, the Office has other significant responsibilities, for example:

- Stimulation of school desegregating and cut-off of Federal school and college aid under the Civil Rights Act.

- Coordination of Federal education programs under E.O. 11185.
- Reporting on the "condition and progress" of education in the context of "excellence," civil rights, and poverty (N.B. This is a traditional OE function with a new urgency).

#### Current Strains on Management

The management capabilities of the Office of Education have already been strained to the breaking point in administering legislation enacted a year or more ago; for example:

- There are currently more than 300 unfilled positions, about one out of five authorized.
- 16 months after enactment of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 not one staff member has been added to the regional offices which are expected to play an important role in administration of the program.
- Personnel hired for the NDEA student-loan program (now requiring increased attention because of poor repayment experience) are spending much or all of their time on the initiation of the newly authorized work-study program or on preparing materials to justify the Administration scholarship program.
- Many employees are spending a part of each day processing the heavy load of paper work for the civil rights program.
- Personnel literally do not have time to recruit additional staff to fill the vacancies; cumbersome personnel procedures impose a further delay and impediment to hiring.

#### Lack of Preparation for New Legislation

At the same time little has been done to prepare for administration of new programs despite impending enactment of at least the elementary-secondary proposals. On April 8, the Office promises to make final



decisions as to who will be responsible for establishing task groups to plan for each title of the elementary-secondary bill. No work of any significance has been done in connection with the grants for low income children, school libraries and textbooks, or State departments of education. Some preliminary work by one staff man and one consultant has been done in connection with the research and development centers and the supplementary centers and services. A controversy concerning who will run the latter program has already threatened its effective implementation. Certainly a great deal of staff and consultant time will be required to develop regulations, to plan for advisory committees (one of which must be appointed within 90 days after the bill has been enacted), to work with the Census Bureau on the collection of data, and to arrange for the administrative mechanics of the five titles of the bill. So far as we have been able to determine, even less has been done to prepare for implementation of the higher education bill.

#### Traditional OE Problems

##### The old problems persist:

- The Office has long been thwarted by the presence of unimaginative, unquestioning staff--in too many top administrative positions. These persons exert an oppressive influence on the character of the Office and frequently obstruct the generation and flow of new ideas.
- Too frequently, neither the so-called "specialists" nor the administrative staff have real expertise in their fields.
- The Office has customarily limited itself, in recruitment of new personnel, to those with school teaching or administrative experience and has systematically excluded persons with other types of backgrounds whose interests or experience could strengthen and diversify staff resources.

*such as?*

- There is no program or management planning, no system for evaluation of Federal education activities, and little concern with the economics of the education industry.

As a consequence of these and other factors, the Office has acquired a reputation as one of the least effectively administered Federal agencies. Its reputation has made recruitment for new top level staff a time-consuming and frustrating job. For example, Commissioner Keppel looked 17 months to find a man for the important educational statistics post and was refused by at least \_\_\_\_ individuals. A similar situation occurred in the higher education facilities post.

A new uncertainty and in some cases fear is being expressed by the existing staff over pending personnel and organization changes which the new Deputy will be planning.

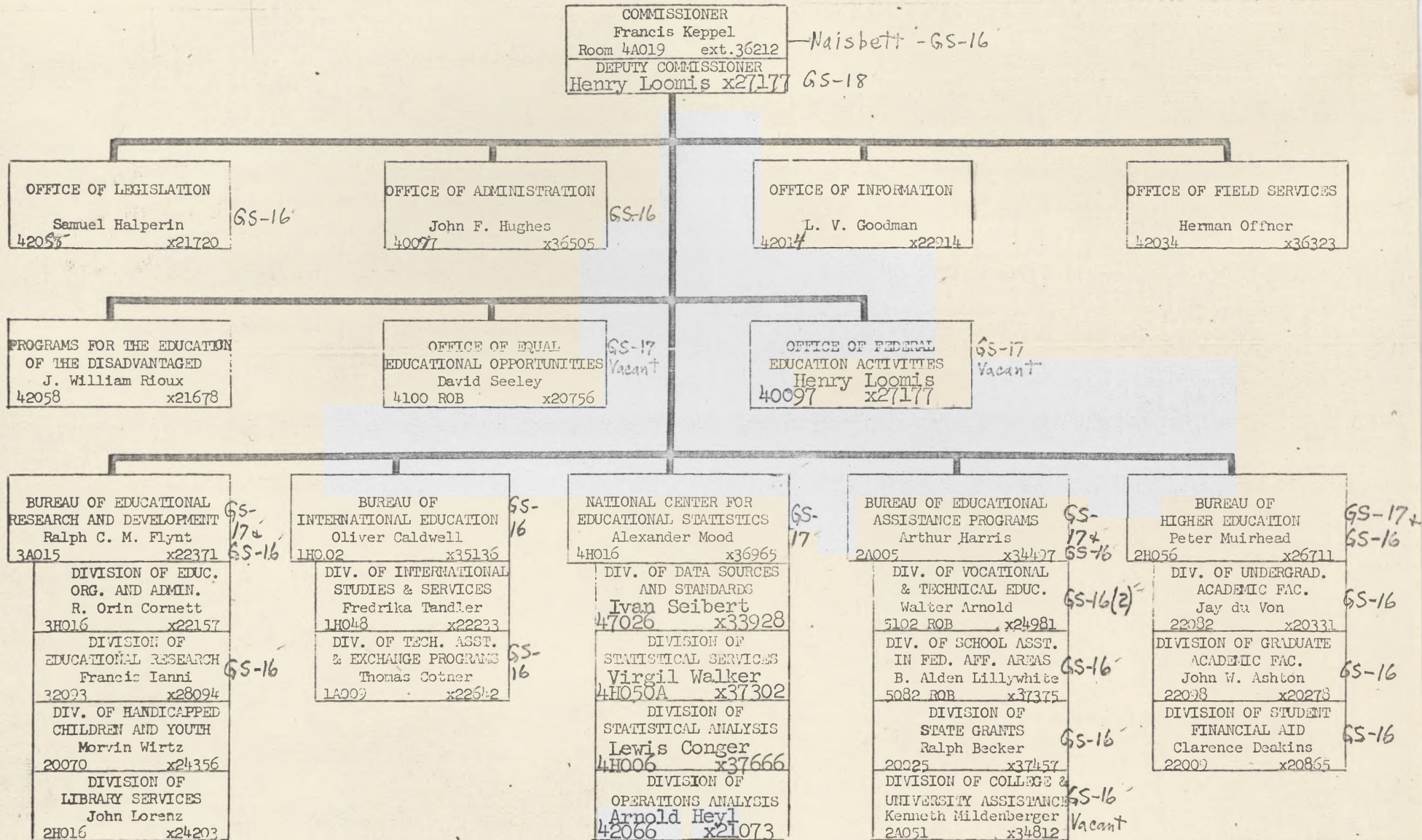
### Conclusion

If the Office of Education is to discharge its growing responsibilities effectively, it must assume a less passive role in its relationships with the States, give consideration to decentralization of its activities, and re-examine the need for continuation of certain "consulting" services now provided. It must also establish a rational internal structure that will facilitate the administration of Federal aid programs. But the overall picture of the Office at present is one of an organization very poorly prepared for these tasks, an organization whose staff is insecure, an organization greatly in need of a solution to its management problems and of personnel to overcome them.



U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Names and numbers in unit boxes indicate principal contact persons, their room numbers, and telephone extensions.