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Humphrey Says "Era of Separate Federal and State Sovereignties Is Dead," Cites Dramatic Enlargement of the Federal Role

Speaking before the Canadian-American Conference in Winnipeg last night, former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey credited Democratic leadership for the "splendid achievements of the 60's".

But Humphrey pointed out that the proliferating government programs made cooperation and coordination increasingly important. "We cannot afford the isolation of any government -- local, state or federal -- if we are to succeed in our great national undertakings," he said.

Noting that the "Federal programs depend crucially upon the competance and willingness of state and community personnel for their effective functioning," the former Vice President said he supported legislation to strengthen state legislatures and other local bodies "because the Federal government needs strong partners."

The full text of Mr. Humphrey's speech follows.

REMARKS

THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

CANADIAN AMERICAN CONFERENCE

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

NOVEMBER 14, 1969

Five years ago in a speech at the University of Michigan, President Lyndon Johnson talked about his plans for the "Great Society" -- and the phrase became an eloquent and familiar expression of the goals of his administration.

Less well remembered -- but equally important -- is a companion phrase from the same speech -- Creative Federalism.

When President Johnson expressed his hopes and desires for the future of this country, he knew well that fine legislation does not a program make, that good administration -- and cooperative administrative relationships -- are essential components if there is to be true progress.

Creative Federalism was the phrase the President used to describe the whole array of cooperative relationships between the Federal Government and State governments, between city, county and other local government units, between universities and hospitals, voluntary agencies, professional and trade associations and the whole of the private sector.

The need for these working relationships was increasingly obvious. In the 1960's, the Congress had finally shaken the tired states rights rhetoric of the past and -- in a series of creative enactments -- dramatically enlarged the role of the Federal government.

The whole concept of federal responsibility took on new meaning under the activist leadership of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

Before 1960, federal grants-in-aid were seen primarily as an assist to localities that lacked the wherewithal to solve their own problems. The money -- and sometimes the technical assistance -- came from Washington, but policymaking and power remained in the community.

But the new legislation of the 60's carried broad statements of national purpose. Now federal programs were being designed to meet national needs and the state and local governments were being asked to serve as a cooperative partner in the execution of these programs.

In a whole basketful of categories the Federal government made clear its determination to improve the conditions and opportunities of life for all citizens in our society.

The citizen is not only a citizen resident of a locality, but a citizen of the United States and therefore entitled to the protections and opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution. The emphasis in the new Federal policy is on United States citizenship.

In a series of dramatic substantive programs, the Democratic administrations and the Congress declared war not only on poverty, but on unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, the deterioration of our cities, the pollution of our environment and the infringement of civil rights and liberties for many of our citizens.

Four major legislative achievements are destined to greatly change the American political and social order, broadening the political base and expanding and deepening the social structure.

1. The Civil Rights Act of 1964

2. The Voting Rights Act of 1965

3. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

4. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

And in each of these landmark measures, the legislative language referred to the national concern.

In 1961, the Area Redevelopment Act declared that maintaining the economy at a high level was "vital to the best interests of the United States," and that unemployment detracted from the "national welfare".

In 1962, the Manpower Development and Training Act said, "It is in the national interest" to train those without skills "in order that the nation may meet" its manpower needs.

In the revolutionary Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the 89th Congress noted that, "The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society", and concluded: "It is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation."

In the Model Cities legislation of 1966, the Congress declared that "improving the quality of urban life is the most critical domestic problem facing the United States".

Throughout this series of historic enactments -- education bills without precedent, civil rights legislation that many of us had struggled for decades to enact, housing and manpower and area redevelopment -- one emphasis remained constant: the Federal government had a goal and a purpose and federal sums would be expended to achieve these national goals and purposes.

No longer would federal grants be conceived merely as financial aid to states and communities.

Congress once and for all asserted the primacy of the national interest in a broad range of activities -- many until then considered the exclusive province of state or local government.

There are some obvious reasons for this dramatic change. Chief among them is the increase in the migratory habits of our population subsequent to World War II. We became a mobile nation and state loyalties grew thin. We are a nation on the move and our ties are to country, to family and to job. Provincial local loyalties have diminished. No longer do families remain in the towns of their forebears, no longer do children live in the cities where they were raised.

In-migration to our cities and to the sunny states of California and Florida -- aided by decreasing transportation costs -- are in large part the result of improved communication. Rural families, once isolated from the general culture, were able to see Chicago and New Orleans close up on the television screen. It looked good to many. And many -- too many for the available services -- decided they wanted to join the urban scene.

The poorly schooled boy from South Carolina began showing up as a welfare statistic in New York City. The malnourished child from Appalachia was in the hospital in Detroit.

This mobility among our people made health, welfare, the physical environment, education, and economic development matters of national -- rather than local -- concern.

The recognition that a single city had no leverage in the fight for clean air and drinkable water made clear the need for national intervention on behalf of the beleagured municipalities.

The inability of minority groups to achieve first-class citizenship after a century of struggle made abundantly clear the need for legal statement of national conscience and federal enforcement of national standards.

For the better part of this decade we have been involved in the very complicated task of defining our national objectives in these and other areas. We have been writing and passing the legislative programs that could tackle them effectively. And we have been struggling to coordinate the proliferating inter and intra governmental efforts.

We have been more successful with the first two of these objectives than with the latter.

There was -- there still is -- considerable overlap and duplication both among and between layers of government and among and between the agencies on a given level of government.

But administrative problems pale before the splendid achievements of the 60's.

When I left the Office of the Vice President in 1968, there were 95 areas for which grants-in-aid were available. Only ten of these had existed before 1930. Seventeen were added during the years of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and 29 were added between the New Deal and 1961. In just five years -- between 1961 and 1966 -- 39 new categories of Federal programs were added to the national catalog -- and every one of these addressed a national need and maintained policymaking and control on the Federal level.

In a not-yet-published report on the Federal system from the Brookings Institution, author James Sundquist notes that the "dramatic expansion of the range of concern of the federal government in the 1960's can be seen as the culmination of a historic trend -- the final burial, perhaps, of traditional doctrines of American federalism that, for a long time, had been dying hard."

Sundquist goes on to discuss the traditional view of federalism -- the dual system -- where the federal and the state governments were considered separate sovereignties with specific demarkations in their spheres of activity.

But America's leading student of federalism, Morton Grodzins, in his well-known analogy likening our federal system to a marble cake, rather than the more commonly conceived layer cake, concludes that there never really had been exclusive jurisdiction.

Even under the loosely written Articles of Confederation -- when citizens were decrying the lack of central authority -- the Federal government was providing limited grants-in-aid for education. Today the Federal government provides billions for education -- though education is still generally considered the province of local government.

The Federal government and the states have always cooperated in a wide variety of areas -- banking, railroad construction, internal improvements, and so forth.

Relationships -- among governments as well as people -- are seldom established by design. They evolve.

As Mr. Sundquist notes in his excellent report, the intermingling of local, state and federal interests is no sudden departure. It is the culmination of our gradual drift toward a single unified system of government in which all the partners contribute to the efficient functioning of each other.

With the exception of President Eisenhower, the national leaders of the 20th century have steadfastly supported the expansion of the federal responsibility.

Eisenhower, who ran on the Republican States Rights platform of 1952, searched in vain for a federal activity to return to the states during his years in the White House.

He appointed a Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and asked it to recommend limitations on the federal role.

Instead, the Commission, in a sophisticated and enlightened report, supported the trend toward cooperative government, concluding, "There are few activities of government indeed in which there is not some degree of national interest and in which the national government is without constitutional authority to participate in some manner."

"The National government and the states should be regarded not as competitors for authority but as two levels of government cooperating with or complementing each other in meeting the growing demands on both," the Commission reported back to the Chief Executive.

A subsequent commission of governors, charged by the President with the same task, had a tough time finding anything to recommend. In the end, they suggested eliminating federal grants for vocational education and sewage treatment plants. Both proposals were rejected by the Congress.

It is clear that the Federal government is in the service business to stay.

I do not want to give you the idea that the American federal system is perfect. It isn't. Its imperfections are many and the need for refinement is great. It is only the best system of government that man has yet devised.

Actually, it is inaccurate to speak of a single system. We are a sytem of systems. Within each level and throughout each layer are complicated interacting networks of public authorities and private interests.

In addition to the Federal government and the 50 state governments, we share some 19,000 municipal governments, almost as many townships, more than 3000 county governments and so many special purpose districts that we are yet to get an accurate count -- though we know there are enough to bring the total of tax-levying authorities near -- and maybe over -- the one hundred thousand mark.

Any given tax-payer may be under obligations to as many as a dozen of these authorities. In addition to his municipal, state and federal obligations, he will certainly pay for the support of an elementary and a secondary school district, probably a junior college district, usually a state university system. He probably supports county government and he will certainly have taxes levied by several special service districts.

There are special lighting districts and port authorities, there are special recreation districts, sewer districts, fire protection districts, mosquito abatement districts, transit authorities, bridge districts, water districts and pollution control districts -- you name the need, somewhere in the United States there is a special service district answering it.

As if that is not enough to contend with, there are the whole host of local, state and national associations of professionals interacting with each of the levels of government.

Our educational institutions, for example, have to deal with teacher training and credentialling organizations, with local, county and state curriculum code groups, with organizations of education professionals (local, state and national associations of teachers, of administrators, of curriculum specialists, of superintendents of schools, etc.) and of course, the parents who make their voices felt through PTA's and Parents Clubs.

There is a local school board deciding policy -- and there is a county and a state school board, also with policy making authority. Back in Washington, there are committees in the House and the Senate with education as a primary concern. And there is the U. S. Office of Education.

All of these formal and informal public and private groups are concerned with a single enterprise: education. The day to day functioning of a given school is an archtypical example of the melange of interests and governments that interact to affect and influence one single area.

In this case -- education -- it is relatively easy to determine who is in charge.

Too often the citizen cannot identify the final authority in the bewildering battery of entities. Who should he call if he lives in an unincorporated area and his neighbor's septic tank overflows on his property? If he lives in the city and his sewer backs up?

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Often he cannot identify the names on his local ballot. He cannot make an intelligent choice of members for the Hospital Board or for City Court Judges. He does not know who is responsible for clogged highways or polluted air; he cannot decide who to blame for the absence of a stop sign at a busy corner.

These things -- large and small -- are the stuff of government, and they are the kinds of problems our single, unified federal system must be able to handle with facility if we are to lay claim to providing good government.

Contrary to general mythology, the federal government often is more responsive to citizen complaints than local government. Citizens have built-in lobbyists in their Congressmen, who regularly call Federal agencies on behalf of their constituents.

It is a fallacy that local government is closest to the people. Local and state governments are less predictable in their response to citizen complaints and there is less likelihood of finding qualified professionals staffing the smaller units. Many states have yet to institute personnel merit systems and a substantial majority of cities still operate on the archaic spoils system.

The Federal programs depend crucially upon the competance and the willingness of state and community personnel for their effective functioning. The central premise of all the new "people" programs is that they are, in effect, local programs -- but local programs in the national interest. It is in the county court house, the city and village halls and the thousands of town meetings across the nation that their success or failure will be determined.

Congress, in most cases, can do no more than enact enabling legislation. You cannot legislate good administration, you cannot legislate creative local government. It is the community that must act, must initiate applications for the grant money, must administer the resultant program with local people in the community.

The Federal government can offer an infusion of money and ideas, but local leadership and cooperation is essential to final success.

Because the national government has such a large stake -- financial and ideological -- in the effective functioning of state and local governments, a substantial amount of legislation in this decade has included provision to upgrade the quality of the applicable state service or agency.

Because the federal government has superior fiscal resources, the threat to suspend or withhold a grant is a very powerful weapon -- but one to be handled with care. We do not, after all, want to withhold services from our citizens.

I do not mean to suggest that the relationship between the levels of government is hostile or contentious -- on the contrary.

The relationships between the Federal government and the communities are better than they have been for many years. The Federal government has no desire to supercede or supplant local government. The new legislation was designed to strengthen state legislatures and other local bodies because the Federal government needs strong partners.

The Federal government has fostered -- and I have supported -- inter-state compacts and regional compacts, metropolitan councils of government and multi-county authorities. There is increasing recognition of the need to work together and to coordinate the multiplicity of government efforts.

But coordination does not necessarily result in simplification. The new coordinating bodies of this decade have given us a more complicated federal system -- one with five, six and sometimes several levels of government, where before there had been three or four.

Many of these regional groupings have been effective in their efforts. The Appalachia Regional Commission, for example, defined the problems of an economically depressed area and focussed on the need for highways and other transport in order to get the goods to market -- and thus attract industry that previously shunned the area.

Some have been less successful.

One of the stumbling blocks in our federal effort to deal equally with the states is their inherent lack of equality. The largest of our states has 70 times the population of our smallest.

The divergence in financial resources is similiarly unequal.

Some of our states are primarily agricultural, some are primarily industrial. Some have an abundance of water, some are near-desert.

Some are plagued by smog, others need to build highways. Some are very cold and some are very hot.

The same disparities are found among our cities and urban areas.

It is obvious that no national program can deal fairly and equitably with the disparate needs and desires of all cities or all states.

Thus the legislation of the 60's was deliberately flexible, taking into account the diverse needs of our widely varying communities. This necessary flexibility is responsible for some of the resultant chaos and confusion.

Morton Grodzins tells us that a little chaos in government is a good thing. But how much is a little? When confusion and duplication seriously interfere with the successful achievement of our primary objective -- the best government for the least expenditure -- it is time to end the old rivalries between -- and among -- levels of government and proceed with the development of close harmonious working relationships.

Government is a tool for us to use, not an enemy to be abused. We cannot afford the isolation of any government -- local, state or federal -- if we are to succeed in our great national undertakings, if we are to develop a society where the dignity of our people equals the marvelous products of our affluence.

In our growing and demanding United States, we need the wisdom to create, control -- and to support -- a government strong enough to protect our liberties and concerned enough to meet the needs of all of our citizens. That is the meaning of Creative Federalism -- and it is a path to the Great Society.

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When President Johnson expressed his hopes and desires for the future of this country, he knew well that the legislation does not a program make, that good

the new federalism was not so much a distribution of powers between the National & State governments, as a pattern or description of a cooperative partnership of all levels of government in concert with private resources. This partnership of creative federalism was designed to maximize & mobilize the nations resources - public & private - for the achievement of national goals and the solution of increasingly complex problems.

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Example

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model cities

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Government is a tool for us to use, not an enemy to be abused. We cannot afford the isolation of any government -- local, state or federal -- if we are to succeed in our great national undertakings, if we are to develop a society where the dignity of our people equals the marvelous products of our affluence.

In our growing and demanding United States, we need the wisdom to create, control -- and to support -- a government strong enough to protect our liberties and concerned enough to meet the needs of all of our citizens. That is the meaning of Creative Federalism -- and it is a path to ~~the Great Society.~~ creative government.

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The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey

Canadian American Conference

"American Federalism"

Winnipeg, Canada

November 14, 1969

Five years ago in a speech at the University of Michigan, President Lyndon Johnson talked about his plans for the "Great Society" -- and the phrase became an eloquent and familiar expression of the goals of his administration.

Less well remembered -- but equally important -- is a companion phrase from the same speech -- Creative Federalism.

When President Johnson expressed his hopes and desires for the future of this country, he knew well that fine legislation does not a program make, that good administration -- and cooperative administrative relationships -- are essential components if there is to be true progress.

Creative Federalism was the phrase the President used to describe the whole array of cooperative relationships between the Federal government and State governments, between city, county and other local government units, between universities and hospitals, voluntary agencies, professional and trade associations and the whole of the private sector.

The need for these working relationships was increasingly obvious. In the 1960's, the Congress had finally shaken the tired states rights rhetoric of the past and -- in a series of creative enactments -- dramatically enlarged the role of the Federal government.

The whole concept of federal responsibility took on new meaning under the activist leadership of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

Before 1960, federal grants-in-aid were seen primarily as an assist to localities that lacked the wherewithal to solve their own problems. The money -- and sometimes the technical assistance -- came from Washington, but policymaking and power remained in the community.

But the new legislation of the 60's carried broad statements of national purpose. Now federal programs were being designed to meet national needs and the state and local governments were being asked to serve as a cooperative partner in the execution of these programs.

In a whole basketful of categories the Federal government made clear its determination to improve the conditions and opportunities of life for all citizens in our society. The citizen is not only a citizen resident of a state or locality, but a citizen of the U.S., and therefore entitled to the protections and opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution.

In a series of dramatic substantive programs, the Democratic administrations and the Congress declared war not only on poverty, but on unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, the deterioration of our cities, the pollution of our environment and the infringement of civil rights and liberties for many of our citizens. Four major legislative achievements are destined to greatly change the American political and social order - broadening the political base, expanding and opening the social structure -

the Civil Rights Act of 1964
the Voting Rights Act of 1965
the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and
the Federal Aid to Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964.

And in each of these landmark measures, the legislative language referred to the national concern.

..In 1961, the Area Redevelopment Act declared that maintaining the economy at a high level was "vital to the best interests of the United States," and that unemployment detracted from the "national welfare".
..In 1962, the Manpower Development and Training Act said "It is in the national interest" to train those without skills "in order that the Nation may meet "its manpower needs.

.. In the revolutionary Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the 89th Congress noted that "The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society", and concluded: "It is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation."

.. In the Model Cities legislation of 1966, the Congress declared that "improving the quality of urban life is the most critical domestic problem facing the United States."

Throughout this series of historic enactments -- education bills without precedent, civil rights legislation that many of us had struggled for decades to enact, housing and manpower and area redevelopment -- one emphasis remained constant: the Federal government had a goal and a purpose and federal sums would be expended to achieve these national goals and purposes.

No longer would federal grants be conceived as merely financial aid to states and communities.

Congress once and for all asserted the primacy of the national interest in a broad range of activities -- many until then considered the exclusive province of state or local government.

There are some obvious reasons for this dramatic change. Chief among them is the increase in the migratory habits of our population subsequent to World War II. We became a mobile nation and state loyalties grew thin. We are a nation on the move and our ties are to country, to family, and to job. Provincial local loyalties have diminished. No longer do families remain in the towns of their forbears, no longer do children live in the cities where they were raised.

In-migration to our cities and to the sunny states of California and Florida -- aided by decreasing transportation costs -- are in large part the result of improved communications. Rural families, once isolated from the general culture, were able to see Chicago and New Orleans close up on the television screen. It looked good to many. And many - too many for the available services - decided they wanted to join the urban scene.

The poorly schooled boy from South Carolina began showing up as a welfare statistic in New York City. The malnourished child from Appalachia was in the hospital in Detroit.

This mobility among our people made health, welfare, the physical environment, education, and economic development matters of national concern.

The recognition that a single city had no leverage in the fight for clean air and drinkable water made clear the need for national intervention on behalf of the beleaguered municipalities.

The inability of minority groups to achieve first-class citizenship after a century of struggle made abundantly clear the need for a legal statement of national conscience and federal enforcement of national standards.

For the better part of this decade we have been involved in the very complicated task of defining our national objectives in these and other areas. We have been writing and passing the legislative programs that could tackle them effectively. And we have been struggling to coordinate the proliferating inter-and intra-governmental efforts.

We have been more successful with the first two of these objectives than with the latter.

There was - there still is - considerable overlap and duplication both among and between layers of government and among and between the agencies on a given level of government.

But administrative problems pale before the splendid achievements of the 60's.

When I left the Office of the Vice President in 1968, there were 95 areas for which grants-in-aid were available. Only ten of these had existed before 1930. Seventeen were added during the years of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and 29 were added between the New Deal and 1961. In just five years - between 1961 and 1966 -- 39 new categories of Federal programs were added to the national catalog -- and every one of these addressed a national need - and maintained policymaking and control on the Federal level.

In a not-yet-published report on the Federal system from the Brookings Institution, author James Sundquist notes that the "dramatic expansion of the range of concern of the federal government in the 1960's can be seen as the culmination of a historic trend --the final burial, perhaps, of traditional doctrines of American federalism that, for a long time, had been dying hard."

Sundquist goes on to discuss the traditional view of federalism -- the dual system -- where the federal and the state governments were considered separate sovereignties with specific demarkations in their spheres of activity.

But America's leading student of federalism, Morton Grodzins, in his well-known analogy likening our federal system to a marble cake, rather than the more commonly conceived layer cake, concludes that there never really had been exclusive jurisdiction.

Even under the loosely written Articles of Confederation -- when citizens were decrying the lack of central authority -- the Federal government was providing limited grants-in-aid for education. Today the Federal government provides billions for education -- though education is still generally considered the province of local government.

The federal government and the states have always cooperated in a wide variety of areas -- banking, railroad construction, internal improvements, and so forth.

Relationships - among governments as well as people -- are seldom established by design. They evolve.

As Mr. Sundquist notes in his excellent report, the intermingling of local, state, and federal interests is no sudden departure. It is the culmination of our gradual drift toward a single unified system of government in which all the partners contribute to the efficient functioning of each other.

With the exception of President Eisenhower, the national leaders of the 20th century have steadfastly supported the expansion of the federal responsibility.

Eisenhower, who ran on the Republican States Rights platform of 1952, searched in vain for a federal activity to return to the states during his years in the White House.

He appointed a Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and asked it to recommend limitations on the federal role.

Instead, the Commission, in a sophisticated and enlightened report, supported the trend toward cooperative government, concluding, "There are few activities of government indeed in which there is not some degree of national interest and in which the national government is without constitutional authority to participate in some manner."

"The national government and the states should be regarded not as competitors for authority but as two levels of government cooperating with or complementing each other in meeting the growing demands on both," the Commission reported back to the Chief Executive.

A subsequent commission of Governors, charged by the President with the same task, had a tough time finding anything to recommend. In the end, they suggested eliminating federal grants for vocational education and sewage treatment plants. Both proposals were rejected by the Congress.

It is clear that the Federal government is in the service business to stay.

I don't want to give you the idea that the American federal system is perfect. It isn't. Its imperfections are many and the need for refinement is great. It is only the best system of government that man has yet devised.

Actually, it is inaccurate to speak of a single system. We are a system of systems. Within each level and throughout each layer are complicated interacting networks of public authorities and private interests.

In addition to the Federal government and the 50 state governments, we share some 19,000 municipal governments, almost as many townships, more than 3,000 county governments and so many special purpose districts that we are yet to get an accurate count -- though we know there are enough to bring the total of tax-levying authorities near -- and maybe over -- the one hundred thousand mark.

Any given tax-payer may be under obligations to as many as a dozen of these authorities. In addition to his municipal, state and federal obligations, he will certainly pay for the support of an elementary and a secondary school district, probably a junior college district, usually a state university system. He probably supports county government and he will certainly have taxes levied by several special service districts.

There are special lighting districts and port authorities, there are special recreation districts, sewer districts, fire protection districts, mosquito abatement districts, transit authorities, bridge districts, water districts, and pollution control districts -- you name the need, somewhere in the United States there is a special service district answering it.

As if that isn't enough to contend with, there are the whole host of local, state and national associations of professionals interacting with each of the levels of government.

Our educational institutions, for example, have to deal with teacher training and credentialling organizations, with local, county and state curriculum code groups, with organizations of education professionals (local, state and national associations of teachers, of administrators, of curriculum specialists, of superintendents of schools, etc.) and of course, the parents who make their voices felt through PTA's and Parent Clubs.

There is a local school board deciding policy -- and there is a county and a state school board, also with policy making authority. Back in Washington, there are committees in the House and the Senate with education as a primary concern. And there is the U. S. Office of Education.

All of these formal and informal public and private groups are concerned with a single enterprise: education. The day to day functioning of a given school is an archetypal example of the melange of interests and governments that interact to affect and influence one single area.

In this case -- education -- it is relatively easy to determine who's in charge.

Too often the citizen cannot identify the final authority in the bewildering battery of entities. Who should he call if he lives in an unincorporated area and his neighbor's septic tank overflows on his property? If he lives in the city and his sewer backs up?

The county supervisors? The Mayor? The Sanitary District? The Water District? The Pollution Control board?

Which jurisdiction do you call when the water main breaks or the house next door is abandoned or the trash is uncollected?

What does a citizen do if his complaint is badly handled?

Often he cannot identify the names on his local ballot. He can't make an intelligent choice of members for the Hospital Board or for City Court Judges. He doesn't know who is responsible for clogged highways or polluted air; he can't decide who to blame for the absence of a stop sign at a busy corner.

These things - large and small - are the stuff of government, and they are the kinds of problems our single, unified federal system must be able to handle with facility if we are to lay claim to providing good government.

Contrary to general mythology, the Federal government often is more responsive to citizen complaints than local government. Citizens have built-in lobbyists in their Congressmen, who regularly call Federal agencies on behalf of their constituents.

Local and state governments are less predictable in their response to citizen complaints, and there is less likelihood of finding qualified professionals staffing the smaller units. Many states have yet to institute personnel merit systems and a substantial number of cities still operate on the archaic spoils system.

The Federal programs depend crucially upon the competence and the willingness of state and community personnel for their effective functioning. The central premise of all the new "people" programs is that they are, in effect, local programs -- but local programs in the national interest. It is in the county court house, the city and village halls and the thousands of town meetings across the nation that their success or failure will be determined.

Congress, in most cases, can do no more than enact enabling legislation. You cannot legislate good administration, you cannot legislate creative local government. It is the community that must act, must initiate applications for the grant money, must administer the resultant program with local people in the community.

The Federal government can offer an infusion of money and ideas, but local leadership and cooperation is essential to final success.

Because the national government has such a large stake -- financial and ideological -- in the effective functioning of state and local governments, a substantial amount of legislation in this decade has included provision to upgrade the quality of the applicable state service or agency.

Because the Federal government has superior fiscal resources, the threat to suspend or withhold a grant is a very powerful weapon -- but one to be handled with care. We do not, after all, want to withhold services from our citizens.

I do not mean to suggest that the relationship between the levels of government is hostile or contentious -- on the contrary.

The relationships between the Federal government and the communities are better than they have been for many years. The Federal government has no desire to supercede or supplant local government. The new legislation was designed to strengthen state legislatures and other local bodies because the Federal government needs strong partners.

The Federal government has fostered -- and I have supported -- inter-state compacts and regional compacts, metropolitan councils of government and multi-county authorities. There is increasing recognition of the need to work together and to coordinate the multiplicity of government efforts.

But coordination does not necessarily result in simplification. The new coordinating bodies of this decade have given us a more complicated federal system -- one with five, six and sometimes seven levels of government where before there had been three or four.

Many of these regional groupings have been effective in their efforts. The Appalachia Regional Commission, for example, defined the problems of an economically depressed area and focussed on the need for highways and other transport in order to get the goods to market -- and thus attract industry that previously shunned the area.

Some have been less successful.

One of the stumbling blocks in our federal effort to deal equally with the states is their inherent lack of equality. The largest of our states has 70 times the population of our smallest.

The divergence in financial resources is similarly unequal.

Some of our states are primarily agricultural, some are primarily industrial. Some have an abundance of water, some are near-desert.

Some are plagued by smog, others need to build highways. Some are very cold and some are very hot.

The same disparities are found among our cities and urban areas.

It is obvious that no national program can deal fairly and equitably with the disparate needs and desires of all cities or all states.

Thus the legislation of the 60's was deliberately flexible, taking into account the diverse needs of our widely varying communities. This necessary flexibility is responsible for some of the resultant chaos and confusion.

Morton Grodzins tells us that a little chaos in government is a good thing. But how much is a little? When confusion and duplication seriously interfere with the successful achievement of our primary objective -- the best government for the least expenditure -- it is time to end the old rivalries between -- and among -- levels of government and proceed with the development of close, harmonious working relationships.

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