

PROGRAM REDUCES SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Not too many years ago most of us believed in the truth of the old saying, "Nothing succeeds like success." It would appear today, however, that the road to success may be a one-way street to oblivion.

It seems so, at least as far as certain Federally-funded programs in education are concerned.

A good case in point is the Office of Education's highly successful Title VIII effort to reduce school dropouts.

"In spite of dramatic evidence of nineteen separate dropout prevention projects throughout the country, plans are afoot in our nation's capitol to reduce the \$10 million allocated for these programs to \$4 million," said Owen Lee, Director of Title VIII Projects.

One begins to wonder just what is the rationale for such a reduction. Certainly results, as published in carefully documented evaluation reports of the projects, indicate that significant progress is being made toward keeping in the educational mainstream thousands of school age youngsters who otherwise would be out in the streets causing many difficult and complex problems.

Once there, they would become at best unemployable members of a welfare society, and at worst prime candidates for a life in the dim world of vice and crime.

What has been the extent of success in these nineteen dropout prevention projects? A recent report given at a Director's Conference in St. Louis showed that the original ten Title VIII Projects, (Seattle, St. Louis, Baltimore, Texas, Arkansas, Miami, Paducah, Fall River, Massachusetts, Fredonia New York, Dayton, and Pine Ridge, South Dakota), with a total average secondary enrollment of 35,300 students, produced an astounding 45.3% reduction in the number of dropouts over the three-year period between September 1969 and June 1972.

Presented graphically, the number and percent of

dropouts in 1971-72 (1,953 or 5.53%) contrasted dramatically with the initial base-line figures of 3,572 or 10.12% in 1968-69. One wonders how the Federal government can justify a huge reduction in funding the face of such obvious success.

The St. Louis Conference report also showed significant results in a second group of nine Title VIII Projects which began dropout prevention projects in the Fall of 1971. The total average yearly secondary enrollment for these target schools was 21,000 students. In the base-line year, 1970-71, dropouts totaled 2,604 or 12.4%. During the 1971-72 school year, dropouts were reduced to 1,843 or 8.7%.

The successes reported in the individual projects are equally impressive, doubly so because they are recorded in terms of carefully constructed evaluation designs.

It is difficult, when reviewing the success of individual projects, to understand why responsible leaders in Washington, D.C. are not calling for substantial increases in funding rather than drastic reductions.

In the Seattle School District #1, the dropout rate in 1968-69, the year prior to the institution of Project CADRE, was 20%. By the end of the 1971-72 school year, the dropout rate in the target schools had shrunk to 12%.

Equally impressive was the reduction of absenteeism between 1968-69 and 1971-72, and also creditable academic gains in reading and mathematics were reported.

Federal funds to support dropout prevention programs have been applied under conditions of strict accountability to achieve the major objectives of those programs.

Accountability and management by objectives are made a mockery by such actions. Is our national policy to support only untried activities and to gradually eliminate those which have proven themselves?

partment of Labor.

The new officers include Mr. Harold Booker, President, representing Housing Authority of King County, Mr. Lloyd Hara, Vice-President, representing King County Council, Mr. Leon Vaughn, Secretary, representing Environmental Commission, and Mrs. Edna Johnson, Treasurer, representing the Department of Health and Social Services.

SKCEOB ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

The Seattle King County Economic Opportunity Board, Inc. announced the election of new officers for 1973, at their January Board meeting. The agency is the largest of its kind in the Pacific Northwest. Delivering health and social services to the disadvantaged of Seattle and King County. The funding is provided through the Office of Economic Opportunity, Health Education and Welfare, and the De-

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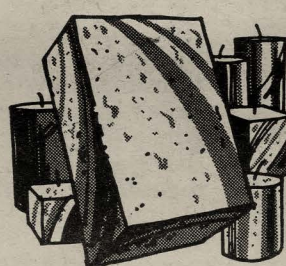
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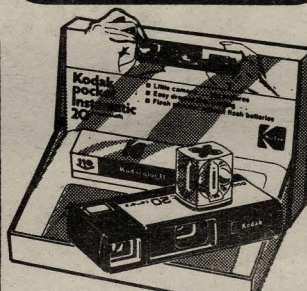
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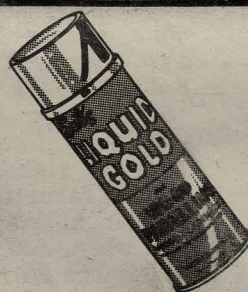
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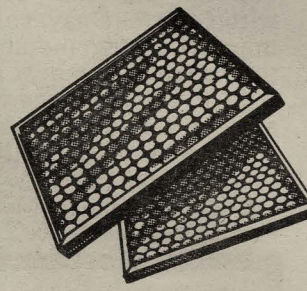
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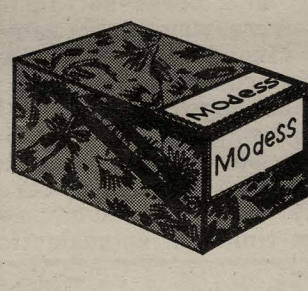
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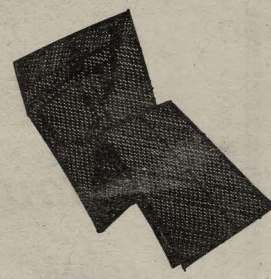
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