

Memo to File

Wilbur Cohen called from Washington 9:00 p.m. December 8, 1960.

He has been asked by Kennedy to chair one of a number of confidential and anonymous task forces, his being in the area of health and social security. The primary concern is for recommendations on urgent new legislation of high priority that should be drafted and submitted during the first few months of the new administration to set the tone of the "New Frontier." The responsibility is "only for the most urgent and significant steps, not the long range program." Likewise, they will not be immediately responsible for recommendations on expanding the scale of existing programs although this might be brought up with Secretary Ribicoff in preparing the final report. This is due by January 1. On questioning, he indicated that the following topics were also within the scope of the committee. First of all, probably, the medical care for the aged which was part of Kennedy's campaign but in addition to this, questions on medical research and education, construction, facilities, medical students, supply, fellowships, etc.

The membership of the committee is Wilbur Cohen, Chairman, at University of Michigan (NO 3 1511, Ext. 2053 - while in Washington, he can be contacted through Ted Sorenson in Senator Kennedy's Office and will probably stay at the Burlington Hotel). Other James Dixon, President of Antioch College; Herman Simms, President of Haverford College; Dean Clark, Massachusetts General Hospital; Robert Cook, Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins; and myself. There is an obvious gap between the other four members and Cook and myself and we were evidently named on Senator Kennedy's own initiative, probably on Schreiber's recommendation. There is another task force on education but the present one would be involved with medical education questions.

In this call he indicated a plan to meet on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday or two days thereof, next week. In a following call, I mentioned the difficulty in transportation that might arise on Friday evening since classes will then be out at so many schools and colleges and indicated the hope that he could schedule the meeting for Tuesday and Wednesday and stated that I would make my own reservations accordingly.

In subsequent telegram, received evening 12/9/60, the meeting is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon and Thursday which may or may not preclude my own attendance.

On question of confidence, this is within my own discretion and expected that I would be able to consult reliable colleagues.

consulting
Action in this respect: I am (1) Kornberg (2) Kretchmer (3) Alway - Cook - Stowe. Am scheduling meeting for Monday 12/12/60 4:00 p.m. for further discussion of some detailed proposals.

*Later changed to 3:15 same day.