

view that many have of the states as effective members of our federal system. This, in turn, can be traced to one or more of the following: (1) the feeling that government in the United States is becoming more and more centralized in Washington; (2) the low visibility of state politics, caused by the shift of public attention to Washington during the depression and war, the country's preoccupation with foreign affairs, and complex state legislative procedures and administrative fragmentation; (3) the obstructionist role of some states in the Negro's struggle for equal rights in the past decade; and (4) the built-in standpoint bias of many states.

This skepticism also stems in part from the fact that we have fifty state governments. For some, it is easy to judge all fifty on the basis of the behavior of two or three. The generally negative attitude of the reporting press toward state government tends to magnify the cases of failure and corruption and to underplay or ignore instances of outstanding and responsible performance.

**A LOOK AT SOME RECENT INDICATORS**

But looking at state government as it is, rather than having hazy feeling about it, what can be said about whether the states actually will "deliver the goods" in the attack on urban problems? The record-to-date suggests a mixed response, first, because there are fifty different states and, second, because there are both hopeful and discouraging signs.

The ACIR's success in implementing its state legislative program provides one index of state effort in this field. The Commission keeps tab on the degree to which states adopt legislation similar in language or intent to "model"

statutes which it has drafted to implement its recommendations. This complex task involves tracing developments in fifty states and defining and identifying legislation which meets the criteria of similarity to Commission proposals. Using a conservative approach, the Commission found that in the 1965-66 biennium, at least forty-three states adopted one to four pieces of legislation similar to its draft bills or consistent with Commission recommendations. These actions covered twenty-two of the sixty-three separate ACIR draft proposals and ranged from property tax reform and revision to financial and technical assistance to local governments. In addition, thirty-eight states enacted one or more statutes that are consistent with ACIR recommendations, but are either not yet framed in model bills or are framed along lines differing from the specific approach of ACIR bills.

These figures clearly highlight one basic finding: greater state legislative progress during the past two years compared to that of the preceding 1963-1964 biennium. This conclusion, however, tells us nothing about the distance still to be covered. Neither does it enable us to weigh the qualitative significance of different kinds of legislation in terms of developing a positive state role in urban affairs. Adoption of one program for state financial assistance to localities, for example, might well be much more crucial than adoption by five states of laws authorizing localities to contract with one another. To get this kind of appraisal, it is necessary to probe the substance of the legislation enacted.

Such a survey reveals some encouraging and some not so encouraging trends in state legislative activity on the urban frontier. Significant ones merit attention.