

Plan to Dismantle O.E.O. Devised to Foil Congress

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By The Associated Press

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—The Administration has devised a detailed plan that calls for dismantling the Office of Economy Opportunity before Congress can come to its rescue, according to a paper prepared by the antipoverty agency's technical staff.

The paper, listing the arguments the Administration should use to support its case, the people in Congress it should work with and the obstacles it can expect to face, urges "completing the disagreeable business as soon as possible."

"The more delay, the more opportunity for Congressional opposition to gather and develop a legislative counter-strategy," says the paper.

Entitled "Congressional Strategy on O.E.O.," the paper advises against a clash over constitutional powers with Congress, which last year extended the agency and its many programs through the fiscal year 1974.

President Nixon's budget for the 1974 fiscal year calls for ending Federal support for Community Action—the main O.E.O.-sponsored antipoverty program—and scattering its remaining programs among other agencies.

"A constitutional confronta-

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PLAN IS DESIGNED TO BREAK UP O.E.O.

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tion may be where the Administration is most vulnerable," the staff paper says. "The opposition can claim that there is clear law and intent that there be an O.E.O. and a Community Action Program."

Instead, the paper advises, the Administration should try to get support for cutting off poverty agency funds in the House and Senate Appropriations Committee, "whose interests most closely align with the President's, and, which have few members with strong feelings for O.E.O."

At the same time, the paper says, the Administration should try to delay Congressional action on the over-all budget for the departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare, forcing them to be financed by special resolutions in which the poverty agency could be isolated.

The paper lists the Senators and Representatives who can be considered friendly to the Administration plan and suggests that Senators Bill Brock, Republican of Tennessee, or Roman L. Hruska, Republican of Nebraska, lead the effort in the Senate. Two other members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Edward W. Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts, and Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey, are described as "classic Senate liberals."

Opposition Is Cited

The paper warns that opposition—"highly vocal, threatening and derogatory"—can be expected from Senators Alan Cranston, Democrat of California; Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York; Gaylord Nelson, Democrat of Wisconsin; Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, and Robert Taft Jr., Republican of Ohio.

"However," it adds, "the depth of expressed concerns can be questioned because primary interest lie elsewhere now."

The Administration can also

expect protest demonstrations by Community Action workers and their supporters, the paper says, and should begin now to develop adverse reactions to them.

To deal with the expected criticism from such groups and Congress, the paper says, the Administration should portray Community Action that has failed to help the poor in the eight years of its existence.

"The argument would stress, instead, a picture of agitation, destructive unrest, diversion of Federal funds to support partisan political activity, administrative waste, criminal misuse of funds and a program structure which exacerbated rather than resolved racial problems," the paper says.

The authors of the paper apparently recognize that there might not be justification for such an argument, for they add: "Just as the Administration understands or should understand the hyperbole of its criticisms, it should not underestimate the strength of support acquired with local leaders."

There is one possible soft spot in the Administration's case. It is the fact that in 1969 when President Nixon disclosed his intention to transfer most O.E.O. programs to other agencies, he praised the original purpose of the agency in studying and combating the problems of the poor, and promised to preserve it.

No suggestion is offered for dealing with that problem.