UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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INTERIOR SUPPORTS THREE INDIAN BILLS NOW BEFORE CONGRESS

The Department of the Interior has recommended enactment of three bills affecting Indians now before Congress. One bill would increase the appropriation authorization for Indian adult vocational education programs and the other two would permit tribes to issue long-term land leases for industrial and commercial development of reservation properties.

In recommending passage of a bill which would increase the vocational training appropriation authorization from $15 million to $20 million annually, the Department suggested an amendment bringing the authorization to $25 million to meet an anticipated heavier demand for these services.

The Department noted a steadily increasing use of vocational training among young Indians. In Fiscal 1966, more than 5,000 heads of families or single persons received institutional vocational training and an additional 1,652 Indians were placed in on-the-job training, the Deparment said.

By Fiscal 1969, the Department estimated, most of the 5,400 Indian students graduating from high school that year and an undetermined number of drop-outs will need vocational training if they are to compete successfully for jobs. The expected increase in demand, together with increased opportunities for on-the-job training, because of increased industrial activity on or near reservations, will require an increase in funds, the Department said.

The two leasing bills would affect the Hualapai Reservation in northwest Arizona and the San Carlos Apache Reservation in the south-eastern part of that state. The Department said that both reservations possess lands suitable for extensive tourist and recreational development and that the San Carlos Tribe has received several proposals for industrial projects.

The lack of authority to enter into property leases for longer than 50 years has discouraged lending institutions and developers in both areas, the Department said. Authority to offer leases up to 99 years has already been extended by special legislation to nine reservations with beneficial results, the Department noted, and would have the same affect for the two Arizona tribes, making possible maximum use of tribal land resources and increased employment for tribal members.

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