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Reaffirming the administration's commitment to what President Nixon described as "a new era in which the future for American Indians is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions," Secretary of the'" Interior Rogers C. B. Morton highlighted recent accomplishments in achieving Indian self-determination before the National Tribal Chairmen's Association at Eugene, Oregon Monday.

He applauded the efforts of the emerging Indian leadership. "They are leading the American Indian into a self-determined age. America's Indian tribes are awakening and on the move," he said.

Reviewing funding for Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, he noted that BIA funding has doubled from $249 million to over $530 million in just four years. During the same period the number of BIA executive positions filled by Indians has risen dramatically. "The number of Indians serving as BIA area directors has risen from lout of -11 to 7 out: of a possible 12," Norton said.

There have been similar dramatic changes in education, he noted. Funding for Indian college scholarships has risen from $3 million to over $15 million in the last four years and today all 200 BIA schools have an Indian advisory school board or education committee.

Economic development has also been encouraging; he said. Norton cited successes in the reservation industrial development program, noting that there are over 220 plants employing over 6,500 Indians on or near reservations today, and that there have been similar accomplishments through the Indian Business Development fund and Tribal Work Experience Programs.

Morton further noted, that "key portions of desperately needed legislation" in the Congress now should be passed in order to continue the progress of recent years.

Concluding a review of "incredible strides in education, economic development, and the achievement of self-determination," Morton stated that "never at any time in the last half century has the Indian's path for a self-determined future been so clear."