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My friends and fellow students;

You were kind to offer this platform today and invite me to present my views on issues and priorities affecting the lives and furniture of Indian Americans. Other commitments prevented me from attending the opening of the conference, but I have followed the proceedings by moccasin telegraph. It is apparent from all accounts that the conferees are doing what they set out to do – that is, baring the modern-day r duties of Indian life, good and bad. And who is more suited to undertake such a study than this assemblage of thoroughly modern American Indians?

Despite the fact that I have passed somewhat beyond the critical age of 30, I hope you will accept me, too, as a modern American Indian.* I accept these times -- not past history.- as being the reality for all living Indians; and I, like you, know that what we do and say in our conduct of Indian affairs will establish realities of the future.

You may think it whimsical of me to call myself one of your "fellow students." The dictionary offers more than one definition of the word. It says a student is "one who pursues Learning in school," (That fits you.) But a student is also described as "one who is an attentive and systematic observer." (That fits me as well you.)

I have been attentively and systematically observing the activities of Indian youth during the months since I became Commissioner of lndian Affairs. , My new office has given me the opportunity to travel and visit in many part of Indian America, and to become acquainted with the ''now'' generation of young Indian men and women.

One thing I have come to believe firmly: These young people should not be relegated to obscure functions, just because they are young. It isn’t the number of gray hairs that counts, it’s the gray matter under the hair we should value. Brainpower doesn’t necessarily improve with age – and youthful minds practice in the art of idea-making.

We are making room for youthful Indian men and women in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Young Indian lawyers, teachers, sociologists, trained business managers and others with more generalized backgrounds are being fitted into positions where their ideas and ideals can contribute to new policy. They are engaging in activities that will give them experience in administration and opportunity for leadership within Government and beyond Government.

Note to press: Commissioner Bruce is a Sioux-Mohawk aged 63.

I find their company and their style stimulating. I aIso find myself in agreement with nearly all the ''new thought" views. For this reason, I was particularly eager to take part in this conference. It offers me a chance to become acquainted with the segment of Indian youth who are not part of the bureaucracy and who have been vocal anti-establishmentarians.

We might have some differences of opinion here, but diversity of views is good when it results in the

creation of fresh perspectives. We all can agree that a lot of stale stuff has cluttered Indian Affairs for a long time.

For example, there’s the thread bear slogan: “the only good BIA Indian is a dead one. such irresponsible statements as this stair Passions and obscure facts they're the tools of the professional Indians” and their fellow Travelers people who have discovered that it is both fashionable And profitable to use Indian misery as the Rocket Ride to personal publicity.

Despite their hammering and the BIA, The fact remains that the BIA what is the most enduring supporter Indians have. It is the means by which the special obligations of the government to work Indian tribes are administered. This is not to deny that there is plenty of room for New Perspectives and the administration. I hope this conference will produce some constructive recommendations for modernization of programs.

The Bia suffers from anemia it doesn't have enough Youngblood this by sizable budget in recent years, government policies and programs have been less than perfect in their social and economic successes partly because they are out in concept and partly because they originate from do not relate to the Indian way. The various kinds of human Salvage operations function at best a stopgap measures which temporarily need the Indians physical needs but they failed to anticipate future economic requirements and they failed to provide cultural and emotional substance for the distinctness of Indians.

The fault is not altogether with the white man at least not with the modern white man at least with missionary Zeal, he has tried to lead Indian Stewart the Great Society. But we Indians haven't really hard to explain that some of these meds and goals are just not out there. There's a short circuit in the communication system between Indians and Mom and Dad's, and it is time for you and me try to fix it. It is time for us to start thinking and talking about what we believe to be the course which the BIA and federal policies should follow for the future.

The Indians are miniscule minority, but we have power for in excess of that which all members who seem to Warrant. I will. Not just another minority, writing the momentary bandwagon of minorities, paraphrasing the slogans and taping the techniques of other groups. We are Indian. We know what it means, but it is time for us to articulate it for the rest of America.

The exercise of articulating it for others would also help us sort out our own thoughts. Boe to ourselves to strip away all the emotion from issues in Indian Affairs, and enunciate a set of priorities to which we can turn our closest attention.

The plain, unadorned fact, the front line priority problem, is that most Indians don't have enough income to live in decency and self-respect.

In many ways Indians were worse off in the affluent 1960s than they had been in the depressed 1930s. In the 1960s many Indians looked like the relics of the Great Depression, even though a lot of people kept telling Indians they were part of the so-called “Great Society”

With few conspicuous expectations, Indians are close to the bottom of the nation's economic totem pole. Even where ample resources exist, the resources have not been developed to their fullest and are therefore not producing the jobs or the income Indian tribal members need for Financial Security.

Indian unemployment is ten times and more the national average, which at present is under 4%.

Children are suffering perhaps the repairable damage to their mental and physical Powers because of malnutrition, cold and inadequate Healthcare. Shacks and shanties are the shelter for entirely too many Indian Reservation families the same kind of miserable housing that existed 30 years ago.

The single most insistent issue in Indian affairs today is how can we eliminate the causes of Indian poverty?

Incredible though it may seem, the BIA has never in the past Define its priority goal as that of seeking to eliminate the causes of Indian poverty. The mission statements of such basic and all important programs as education and resources management fall short of stating that the ultimate responsibility is to create a job producing economy and employable people.

The BIA is currently undergoing a re-alignment that will result in giving priority attention to Priority needs. It seems that BIA had been organized into teams playing under various program banners. I want you to know that I don't regard Indian Affairs as a game, now the BIA as a political football. It must be reshaped into viable structure. I choose this word, viable, because it means capable of living. Instead of continuing to draw its life from the Indian people, the BIA must become capable of breathing new life into Indian communities making them viable.

Indians will never arrive at a happy level of association with the rest of American society after the last barrier to Economic Opportunity has been dropped.

There isn't going to be any real solution to Indian problems social or otherwise under there is a sound economic base and each and every family.

The perfectly obvious cause of Indian polity today is an employment. Indians in the rural reservation communities are jobless because Industrial and Commercial development of such areas has large floor behind the nation as a whole.

There has been pitifully little priming of the pump capital for development on the reservation from either, federal or private sources. However in the past I am pleased to report the rate of industrial growth in Indian areas has mushroomed. A new industry is opening up on the average of once every 10 days and many of them among the big five hundred in assets and growth rates.

Lack of preparedness for the skills and professions of today's job market is another obvious cause of excessively high Indian unemployment. This is the fault of chronic efficiencies in elementary and secondary schools serving Indians whether they be BIA schools, public schools are most Mission schools. According to some of our best Indian teachers and administrators the quality and modernity of education programs actually declined below pre-World War II levels Indian cultural center curriculums and English as a second language were commonplace in many BIA schools a quarter-century ago and they're just now this year and last, again being provided for in the federal budget for Indian schools.

Weather the Indian man or woman worker chooses to remain in the home Community or move to an urban and industrialized area the need for skills in order to get a job remains the same capability of the BIA to fund and operate unemployment assistance program is limited by an annual authorization of no more than $25 million. But there are other sources of training forms that I do not believe have been tapped to their fullest by Indians the National Council on Indian opportunity under the chairmanship Vice President Agnew, is the coordinating body for federal efforts and much attention has been given this past year to the crisis problems of the thousands upon thousands of Indians now drifting into cities

in search of new jobs and new lives.

I have outlined a four-point set up goals that seem to me to be the ones deserving priority effort from this moment forward. I hope we will work together toward their fulfillment.

Our goal is that each Indian community be given an opportunity to expand into an economically viable and socially progressive environment a place that can pridefully be called home, a place that emanates the spirit of modern Indian America.

Our goal is that no Indian shall be relegated to the ranks of unemployables because of lack opportunity for training in occupations that are relevant to these times and relevant to Indian hopes. This means that the land and all that resources will be put to good use as a base for the Indian economy -- In the spirit of the old Indian ways but in the forms that are meaningful for today and the future.

Our goal is that every Indian child shall have the best in education suited to his needs and talents and interests and that all the signs of the second rate in teaching methods, curriculums, materials and facilities will be replaced

And our goal of course is to provide the base within government and within the private sector for Indians to be full participants in the planning and execution of all policies and programs affecting their destinies.

In conclusion may I offer a reminder: In 6 years this nation will be celebrating its 200th anniversary of Independence. In the ensuing two centuries since the Declaration of Independence, the spiritual and economic independence of Indian Americans has declined. Let us pledge that the year 1976 will signal the re-emergence of Indians to the Forefront of American life.