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In a personal letter to a young American Indian who recently won a prize in a national essay contest, Secretary of the Interior Fred- A. Seaton called him a "shining example not only for other young Indian people but for all youthful Americans throughout the country."

The prize winner is Eddie Palmanteer, 27, now living in Salem, Oreg. In his essay he described his dissatisfaction with the sawmill job he formerly held on the Colville Indian Reservation near Nespelem, Washington, and explained why he decided to improve his prospects by enrolling in an accounting course at the Merritt-Davis School of Commerce in Salem. The opportunity to take the course was provided to Mr. Palmanteer by the Bureau of Indian Affairs through its adult vocational training program.

The essay contest was sponsored by an advertising agency representing private business schools.

The full text of Secretary Seaton's letter to Mr. Palmanteer follows:

"Having just read your prize-winning essay, which was brought to my attention by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, I want to express to you at once my heartiest congratulations and my deeply-felt admiration.

"Like many other young people of American Indian descent, you have shown a commendable eagerness to develop your capabilities, acquire new skills, and improve your prospects for leading a fuller and more productive kind of life. Speaking both for myself and on behalf of the Department of the Interior, I am particularly pleased to learn that you took advantage of the opportunities offered by the Indian Bureau's adult vocational training program and entered the course in accounting in a Salem school of commerce which I understand you have now finished.

"It is a source of real gratification to me that the Department of Government which I represent was able to provide you with this training as it has similarly aided many hundreds of other young Indian men and women during the past few years. But the far more important point is the personal initiative you have displayed and the shining example you have set not only for other young Indian people but for all youthful Americans throughout the country.

"For this, I salute you and wish you the very best of good fortune in your newly-chosen profession."