Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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Education and training programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs benefited an increasing number of Indians of all ages during the fiscal year 1959, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton said today in releasing the Department1s annual report.

Adult vocational training under Indian Bureau contracts with trade schools throughout the country was furnished to 1,547 Indians during the year. This contrasted with 376 trainees in 195B, the first year of the Bureau's adult vocational training program.

Enrollment of school-age Indian children in schools of all types increased to an all-time high figure of approximately 132,000, about 92 percent of the school-age children Sixty-one percent were enrolled in public schools, 30 percent in 285 Federal schools operated by the Indian Bureau, and 9 percent in mission and other private schools.

Adult education courses on the reservations for the benefit of illiterate or inadequately educated Indians were conducted by the Bureau at 80 locations in 1959 as compared with 75 in 1958.

Grant funds were made available by the Bureau to help over 500 Indian students in obtaining an education beyond the high school level.

Another major development of the fiscal year, according to the Bureau’s section of the annual report, was Secretary Seaton’s radio address of September 18, 1958, clarifying the Department's position on the centrally important question of determining trust responsibilities for Indian tribal groups.

Referring to the resolution on this subject adopted by Congress in 1953 (House Concurrent Resolution No. 108 of the 83d Congress), the Secretary cited varying interpretations given to this document over the preceding five years and mentioned the impression created by some interpreters that "it is the intention of Congress and the Department of the Interior to abandon Indian groups regardless of their ability to fend for themselves.

Secretary Seaton strongly repudiated any such interpretation. Summarizing his position, he said: " ••• no Indian tribe should end its relationship with the Federal Government unless such tribe or group has clearly demonstrated--first, that it understands the plan under which such a program would go forward, and second, that the tribe or group affected concurs in and supports the plan proposed."

The one piece of new Indian terminal legislation enacted by Congress during fiscal 1959 was in full harmony with the Department's position. It covers 41 small Indian groups in California which had explicitly asked for such legislation and provides for a referendum on each property distribution or termination plan before it becomes effective. By the end of the period 23 of the groups had submitted such plans and all of these had been tentatively approved by the Department.

Income to Indian tribes and individuals from leasing of their lands for oil and gas development declined for the second year in a row from the record-smashing total of nearly $72,000,000 reached in 1957. In 1959 the income from this source totaled $46,587,458. This was the third highest figure ever recorded.

Although, there was a substantial decrease in bonus income during 1959, the increasing production on Indian (especially Navajo) lands was reflected in an all-time-high royalty income figure of $30,172,382. This compared with $18,453,532 in 1958.

Sales of timber from Indian lands advanced during the reporting period and cash receipts from this source totaled about $9,000,000 as compared with approximately $8,500,000 the preceding year