Media Contact: Henderson 343-9431
For Immediate Release: February 28, 1968
Print PDF

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett today hailed the amendment to the Adult Vocational Training Act as one of the most helpful pieces of legislation ever approved to assist the Indian people.

The amendment increases the authorization for annual appropriations from $15 million to $25 million o President Johnson announced February 5 that he had signed the legislation.

"When President Johnson signed the bill," said Bennett, "he noted that many Indian people and families have been able to learn a saleable skill through this program. It has helped them become self-sufficient and no longer dependent upon the Federal Government."

The Bureau helped find off-reservation jobs for 2,649 Indians during fiscal year 1967. In the same period, 4,785 Indians began adult vocational training. The increased funds, when voted by the Congress, will finance a substantially larger training program.

With the proposed additional AVT funds, a backlog of requests for help would be eliminated and additional on-the-job training opportunities could be offered.

Indians have participated in AVT programs in 23 Western States in 408 schools. Over 1,000 vocational courses are offered to them, representing more than 100 different occupations.

"As a result of this training, over 80 percent of those persons who have completed training under the program and who desire employment are now employed," said Bennett.

"With this increased authorization, the Bureau of Indian Affairs can expand its training, particularly for the younger adult generation, which has become enthusiastic about the success stories of Indians who have 'made it' outside Indian land areas." Each year, there has been an increase in the. Demand for Adult Vocational Training services, particularly by the younger people, and approximately 25 percent of those who have applied have had to accept a delay in entering training. The higher authorization is expected to meet the current demand.