Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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Ever since I first heard several months ago that a conference on Indian youth was being organized under the auspices of Arrow, Incorporated, I have been looking forward to it with keen anticipation. Arrow is to be heartily commended, it seems to me, for taking the initiative in pulling this meeting together, giving it focus, and inviting the many distinguished Indian and non-Indian people who are taking part.

As I see it, a conference of this kind is almost certain to produce helpful and beneficial consequences. It provides a forum for the interchange of information and ideas among people representing many different facets of our national life. It throws the spotlight on an area of specific Indian need which urgently calls for national attention and constructive action. It will in all probability produce at least the beginning framework of a positive program which will undoubtedly expand out and grow in importance over the years to come.

From the standpoint of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, such a conference is particularly welcome. I say this because there is an unfortunate (though understandable) tendency on the part of many people not too well informed in Indian matters to look to the Indian Bureau as the only source of assistance for the Indian citizen, the solver of all Indian problems, and the fountainhead of all organized action in the field of Indian affairs. So it is a rather unusual and exhilarating experience for us when an organization like Arrow takes the lead, calls upon representatives from many other governmental agencies and nongovernmental groups, and merely invites us in as one of the participating agencies.

As all of you doubtless know, the actual scope of our functions in the Bureau is reasonably well delimited by the various laws and treaties under which we operate; and it by no means covers all areas of Indian need or all types of Indian problems. Consequently it seems to me that one of the most useful things I could do here this evening would be to outline the kinds of programs we do have that bear on the needs of Indian youth, how vie are shaping these programs up at the present time, and what we hope to accomplish in terms of lasting benefits for the younger Indian people.

The Bureau’s major program in the youth field, of course, is our educational work which now accounts for nearly one-half of our total budget and roughly the same proportion of all our personnel. This program is aimed primarily at Indian youngsters between the ages of 6 and 18 - from the beginning grades up through the high-school level. It is and always has been one of the most crucially important responsibilities we have in the Bureau.

In my remarks here this evening, I want to touch on three aspects of our regular school program which I believe are especially significant at the present time.

The first is the challenge that we face, in common with public school districts throughout the country, in keeping pace with the constantly increasing school-age population. Without going to detailed statistics, it seems clear to me that we face such a challenge and will continue to face it for some years to come. So we have no grounds for complacency or relaxation even though we do have thousands of Indian children attending school today who were being deprived of educational opportunities just a few years

ago. We must keep moving ahead just to avoid falling behind.

The second point I want to mention is the increasing emphasis we are giving in our education program to enrollment of Indian children in the regular public schools of the Nation. Personally I have always felt that it is most desirable for Indian children to be mingling regularly with non-Indian youngsters not just at the high-school level but down in the elementary grades wherever possible and feasible. To my mind, it is an essentially wholesome and typically American kind of development which will increase interracial understanding and benefit both the Indian and the non-Indian children. So we are making public school enrollment one of the top objectives of our educational program and we have made tremendous progress on this in the past few years. In fact, last year - if we look just at the Indian children in the regular school ages between 6 and 18--we find almost exactly twice as many enrolled in the regular public schools as there were in all the federal schools operated by the Indian Bureau.

The third phase of our school program that I want to emphasize is also a challenge like the first. In my opinion, it is a challenge which all of us--not only Indian Bureau people but tribal leaders and Indian parents generally--must keep constantly in mind" The world of tomorrow, as all of us realize, is certainly to be vastly different from the world of yesterday or even the world of today. While none of us can predict the exact shape of the world to come, at least one trend seems unmistakably clear. This is the technological advancement of our whole society-the increasing emphasis on higher and higher skills - which is generally referred to under the forbidding name of automation.

What it means as a practical matter is that there will undoubtedly be fewer unskilled jobs available ten years from now than there are today and even less if we peer ahead two decades to the year 1977. This is the world in which the children now between 6 and 18 will be living their mature lives and it is obviously the part of wisdom for all of us to begin preparing them right now for productive and fruitful participation in it. We in the Indian Bureau face the task of adjusting our school programs and curriculums to upgrade the general level of knowledge and skills among the growing Indian generation.. Many other agencies and organizations should also plays part and will, I hope, be contributing to the tremendously urgent and demanding job of preparation and adjustment.

When we move beyond the sphere of formal schooling through the 12th grade, there are only a few regular Indian Bureau programs that have a direct bearing on the needs of the Indian young people, and I merely want to touch on them briefly. One of these, of course, is our new vocational education program which is aimed at the age group between 18 and 35 and specifically designed to provide this upgrading of skills which will be so increasingly important as we move further and further into the age of automation. Another activity which might be mentioned is the encouragement we give to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and similar youth groups by making facilities available for meetings and providing other informal kinds of assistance. A third type of action, now being carried forward in most Indian areas by the State extension specialists under contracts with the Indian Bureau, is the fostering of 4-H clubs to give our Indian young people practical experience in farm and livestock and homemaking techniques. A fourth is the limited program of scholarship aids for higher education which is being conducted under Bureau auspices with appropriated funds. A fifth is the program of foster home placement which is administered by our welfare staff in cooperation with various public and private agencies at the state and local level.

From a mere listing of these programs and activities, anyone can see that they provide only a partial coverage for the many and diverse needs of our Indian young people. Looking just at the teen-age group, which is the primary concern of this particular conference, we can readily identify numerous

areas of need which lie outside the scope of our regularly budgeted Indian Bureau programs. There is, for example, the very pressing problem presented by the large number of youngsters in their teens who drop out of school for one reason or another before reaching high school graduation. Even for those who are attending school there is the question of leisure-time activities during summer vacations and similar periods away from the classroom. There is the whole broad and complex question of what we might call preventive medicine for juvenile delinquency on Indian reservations.

There are the hundreds of Indian school graduates eager and well qualified to pursue a higher education needing financial aid which the Bureau cannot supply from the limited funds it has available. These are just a few in a long list of needs that might be mentioned.

One of the main reasons I am so pleased about the calling of this conference is because you will be focusing public attention on needs of this kind, you will be mobilizing resources to meet these needs from a wide variety of public and private sources, you will be making start on the systematic planning of what I hope will be a many-faceted and hard-hitting action program. Among the American people throughout the length and breadth of the country there is, I am convinced, a tremendous reservoir of good will toward our American Indian citizens. I have just seen concrete evidence of this myself in the famous Knickerbocker Ball in New York City where many thousands of dollars were collected to provide scholarships for Indian youngsters in colleges and universities. Another and wholly different kind of example can be found in Brigham, Utah, where local families have recently been welcoming Indian students from our Intermountain School into their homes and giving them an opportunity to learn more about their non-Indian neighbors--and vice versa.

Although this warmth of public feeling toward the Indian is especially noticeable right now, I am sure it is by no means a new development. It has been there for a great many years. But the main difficulty has been that so much of it was unorganized and amorphous--just a kind of general outpouring of good will that was never translated into actual benefits for the Indian people. Through this conference we should be able to start accomplishing such a translation, channelizing the amorphous good will of the American people into practical action programs, and getting underway on a job that undoubtedly should have been initiated many, many years ago.

As I have already intimated, we in the Bureau are delighted to be participating in this conference and we stand ready to play our proper part in meeting the multifarious needs of Indian youth as they may be spotlighted through the workshops and the other conference sessions. I am hopeful that Indian tribal groups--and particularly those with substantial funds in their treasuries--will also take an increasingly active interest in youth programs as time goes along. Several of the tribes, as most of you know, have already made an excellent start in this direction by setting up scholarship funds and other aids for higher education. However, there are many other needs of the young people on the reservations which are also deserving of tribal support and encouragement. I am thinking, for example, of such things as using tribal funds to build recreation facilities and provide other wholesome outlets for the energies of youth as a countermeasure against the dangers of idleness and the eventual drift into juvenile delinquency.

What we are talking about here basically, of course, is a resource--the human resource of the younger Indian generation. We in the Bureau and the many tribal organizations allover the country have spent a great deal of time, money and energy down through the years in developing and protecting the natural resources on the reservations. Irrigation projects have been built and expanded. Soil and water conservation measures have been spread over a constantly enlarging area of Indian land. Timber

resources have been carefully safeguarded against the dangers of overcutting and fire and disease. Ambitious programs for the development and conservation of range resources have been carried out on scores of reservations.

All work of this kind, in my opinion; is crucially important and I believe it is essential for both the Bureau and tribal organizations to push forward with natural resource programs so that the lands on the reservations can be made to provide a decent livelihood for the largest possible number of resident families. However, I also believe it is at least equally' as important--and perhaps even more so--for us to be spending our time, money and energy on the development and protection of the human resource in the younger generation. This generation, as I see it, is something like a seedling plant and it needs to be properly nourished and given every possible encouragement and support if it is to realize its full potentialities in the ripening of time.

And what is the goal of our Indian youth programs in the Bureau, in the tribal organizations, and in the various other public and private agencies? Perhaps each of us here at this banquet would define the goal somewhat differently according to his or her own personal lights. To me, however, it seems pretty clear-cut. Ever since I became Commissioner four years ago last August I have been emphasizing this theme in my private talks both with Bureau personnel and with outside parties. Undoubtedly I shall go on emphasizing it as long as I can find someone who is willing to listen.

One of the real glories of our American way of life; it has always seemed to me, is the great arching horizon of opportunity which we open up for our young people--usually at a very tender age. Most non-Indian young people, by the time they reach the fourth grade or so, have been given to understand that there is no real limit to their aspirations--that they can grow up to be doctors or lawyers or scientists or Senators or even Presidents of the United States.

Unfortunately, however, for a variety of reasons, historical and otherwise, our Indian young people have not ordinarily been exposed to this sort of indoctrination. Instead, they have been permitted in all too many cases to grow up in an atmosphere of aimlessness and apathy and to develop deep feelings of frustration and inferiority. It is this above all else that we are trying to overcome today through our school programs in the Indian Bureau and through every other means we have at our disposal. We are trying to break through the shell of inferiority feelings that has surrounded so many Indian youngsters in the past, to fire their ambitions and quicken their aspirations, to imbue them with a sense of confidence and a hunger for positive achievement.

Personally I believe we have made excellent progress in this direction over the past four years. If our efforts are to be fully successful, however, it is essential that the channels of advancement should be kept open and unclogged for Indian youth and that they should have access to the same types of assistance and guidance which are available to our other young people. That, I take it, is one of the most important purposes of this particular conference.

So I am deeply encouraged by the mere fact that this conference is being held. Even though you may not accomplish everything that all of us could wish for, I have no doubt whatever that a significant start will be made here on the tremendous and urgent job that needs to be done in the Indian youth field. To all of you who are taking an active part in the conference, I extend my heartiest commendations and my very best wishes as you move forward with your sessions. All of us who are concerned, either professionally or personally, with the well-being of our Indian young people will be wishing you well and eagerly awaiting the outcome of your deliberations.