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Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today formally welcomed delegates to a Washington conference on Indian youth being held by Arrow, Incorporated, a nonprofit organization, and read to them a telegram of greeting from President Eisenhower.

The conference is being attended by about 50 delegates from Indian tribal groups and by representatives from many other public and private agencies concerned with youth matters and with Indian affairs. Its twofold purpose is (1) the exchange of ideas between Indian leaders, Indian youth, and non-Indians interested in youth problems; and (2) the development and approval of additional programs to benefit Indian young people.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger C. Ernst addressed a luncheon meeting of the conferees at the Roger Smith Hotel. The text of President Eisenhower's message of greeting follows: "Please give my greetings to all-attending the National Conference on American Indian Youth.

"Every American has a stake in the fullest development of our National resources, physical and spiritual. As a prime resource, the youth of our land must be trained to make their finest contribution to the strength of the Nation and for the fulfillment of their own life purpose.

"Best wishes for a splendid conference and a most enjoyable visit to the Nation's Capital." In his welcoming remarks, Secretary Seaton said:

"It is a pleasure to welcome you here. I applaud the purpose of your conference, which brings together representatives of Indian tribes, private organizations, and Federal agencies in an effort to assist young Indians toward better education and better citizenship.

"We can all be gratified at the progress in Indian education which has been made in recent years. Last year, 132,000 Indian children were in school--a record number. By far the greatest proportion of these, 76,000 were in public schools-almost twice as many as in Federal Indian service schools.

"In 1946, for every Navajo child inside a school, there were three outside. Today, on the Navajo Reservation, the ratio of students to nonstudents is nine to one.

"The same progress is evident in higher education. Back in 1935, there were only 800 American Indians in college. Last year there were 2,800, three and one-half times as many.

"The Federal Government, of course, helped to bring about some of these encouraging changes, as did many colleges, churches, foundations and other organizations which have helped young Indians get an education. But much of the credit is due to the Indians themselves. I understand that 24 tribes have set up scholarship funds for their boys and girls with tribal money. The Jicarilla Apache Tribe in New Mexico has a million dollar scholarship trust fund. The Navajos have one for $5 million, and in this current year the tribe has made scholarship grants amounting to $200,000.

"The fact that you are here today, however, indicates that there is much more work to do for young

Indian - whether they seek higher education, vocational training, or assistance after they leave school. I therefore wish you the greatest success in this meeting. Indian boys and girls, like all American boys and girls, should have every possible opportunity and encouragement for education or training which fits their abilities. Particularly at this time, this need is both obvious and urgent."

Assistant Secretary Ernst told the conferees that one of their big jobs was to clear away the confusion that surrounds many aspects of Indian youth assistance.

"You and your parents," he told the Indian delegates, "have been guided and misguided, abused, coddled, mistreated and spoiled over a long period of time."

He said the deeper he delved into Indian affairs, the stronger is the impression of confusion. "Among Government groups and Indians, I assume each thinks the other is confused," he said. "It is the responsibility of all of us to do away with the actual or alleged confusion."

Asst. Secy. Ernst stressed the need for educational improvements. "Education means not only academic matters, but also spiritual, moral, cultural, social education and other facets," he said.

He noted the conflicting views on responsibility for Indian affairs. "Some say the Indian, some say the Government, some say the state, some say the county, some say society," he said. "But it is everyone's responsibility."