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For Immediate Release: July 24, 1957
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Opportunities for training on the job in manufacturing plants located near Indian reservations will be provided for nearly 700 Indians under contracts recently signed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs with eight private business firms, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton announced today.

Two of the plants providing the training are in North Carolina, two in Arizona, two in South Dakota, and one each in New Mexico and Washington. All have been cooperating in the Indian Bureau's industrial development program and have for some months past been employing Indian workers.

Under the contracts, signed by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Glenn L. Emmons, each enrolling Indian will be given a course of not more than 13 weeks. The cost of the training will be $20 a week for each trainee.

While in training, the Indians will be bona fide employees of the plants and will be paid at least the minimum wage as required by Federal law. The contracts also state that "there is reasonable certainty that the employee-trainee will be continued in an employed status upon completion of the training period."

The eight contracting companies are as follows:

Whitetree's Workshop, an Indian-owned and operated manufacturer of souvenir items on the Cherokee Reservation, North Carolina; Saddlecraft, Inc.;

Knoxville, Tenn., which operates a leather goods plant at Cherokee, North Carolina;

Lear, Inc., of Santa Monica, California, which operates an electronics plant (Lear Navajo) at Flagstaff, Arizona, near the border of the Navajo Reservation;

Casa Grande Mills, Casa Grande, Arizona, a garment factory near the Pima and Papago Reservations; New Moon Homes, Inc.,

Rapid City, South Dakota, manufacturer of house trailers near the Sioux Reservations;

Tatanka, Inc., McLaughlin, South Dakota, toy manufacturer near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation; Navajo Furniture Industries, Inc., Gallup, New Mexico, a furniture plant; and

Bably Manufacturing Co., Yakima, Washington, denim garments manufacturers located near the Yakima Reservation.

While it is not possible at this time to predict just how many Indians will eventually be enrolled in each of the plants, the maximum number that might be trained under all of the contracts is 680.

The training is being furnished under Public Law 959, enacted last summer, which also authorizes training for adult reservation Indians in regular vocational schools. Steps are now being taken by the

Bureau of Indian Affairs to activate this phase of operations in the next few weeks.