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The appointment of a new Commissioner provides a special opportunity to talk to you about the administration's policies with respect to American Indians. I have asked all of the Bureau's employees here in Washington to come to this meeting because I want you to know what these policies are. I have asked you because I know that almost everyone of you has some share in carrying out policies, or in applying the policies to particular cases or situations. Whatever you may be doing, even if you do not realize it at the moment, is sure to involve or affect policy. It may be the selection of personnel, the allotment of appropriated funds, the approval of a lease, the sale of an allotment of land, the release of tribal funds, even a simple letter answering a request for information anyone of these may be an expression of policy.

For some months past, if I have been correctly informed, there has been an undercurrent of expectation in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I can understand that. First you have had a new administration, with a new Secretary and a new Assistant Secretary, whose opinions, methods and convictions you have not known. Then, there has been the Task Force, and one of its members is the new commissioner. You have every reason to expect that he will, with my support, put into effect as rapidly as possible, those Task Force recommendations which can be handled by administrative action. Some of you may not have had a chance to read the Task Force report. Therefore, I want to comment now on the more important recommendations, so that you will understand what changes will be made and what the new policies are.

Let me say first that I fully concur in the three basic objectives which the Task Force has stated: (1) maximum Indian economic self-sufficiency; (2) full participation of Indians in American life; and (3) equal citizenship privileges and responsibilities for Indians. The Task Force said truly that aid from the Indian community is crucial to the achievement of these objectives. Indian aid and support must be secured before projects or programs are commenced. Indians can retain their tribal identities and much of their culture while moving forward toward these objectives.

Next, The Task Force explained why it did not include "termination" as a major objective. At the hearings held by the Task Force it was clear that the Indians were seeing "termination" lurking behind every rock and every tree. I agree with the Task Force that our goal is maximum development. When we reach that goal, termination will have disappeared as an issue.

On numerous occasions I have stated my purpose to improve administration at the reservation level. After all, the reason for the Bureau's existence ought to be the improvement of Indian life. We should send our best people to the reservations--people who can plan and work with Indians, understand them, and be understood by them. We may have to raise the pay of such people, and we shall try to find ways of keeping such people in a job they are doing well, instead of rewarding them by moving them to another agency where salaries are bigger because it has more employees and spends more money. The superintendent at a small agency, with inadequate staff and meager Indian resources may be facing a tougher job than the man at the big agency, with more money, more staff, more resources. In short, I see the main reason for the area offices and the Central Office to be the improvement of reservation administration, and that means improvement in the lives of the Indians. My ambition is to see an action

program moving forward in each Indian community.

Next, I shall talk briefly about the land problem. I firmly believe that the Indian's land base is essential to a sound economic future. I intend to support Indian effort to hold their lands, and even to acquire more land where they need it and can use it productively.

Everybody has heard of the heirship problem, which has caused thousands of acres of Indian land to lie idle, and many more thousands to be used less productively than they could be. Several bills have been introduced in the present Congress on this subject. According to the Senate Committee's report on heirship, there are about 40,000 tracts, worth $180,000,000, in heirship status. If we can achieve a workable law, and then proceed vigorously, we can change materially the economic situation of many tribes.

The need for funds to lend to the tribes was one of the factors in another legislative proposal which the Department sent to the Congress, to remove the $10,000,000 ceiling on the loan fund established by the Indian Reorganization Act. The Congress did not agree to remove the ceiling, but it voted to raise it to $20,000,000. We are now seeking the appropriation of a part of this increase. More money is needed in the Revolving Loan Fund for all sorts of purposes.

Of the $140,000,000 which the Bureau requested Congress to appropriate for this fiscal year, almost exactly $70,000,000 was for education and the allied services of welfare, vocational training, and relocation. By way of showing the rapid growth and complexity of the Bureau's operations, let me point out that in Fiscal 1952, just ten years ago, the total appropriation to the Bureau, including the medical work, was $68,000,000. In the field of education there have been rapid changes of policy during those years. I agree with the Task Force that an independent study of Indian education should be made, and I shall ask the Commissioner to explore ways and means of making such a study.

Finally, one other piece of legislation suggested by the Task Force was sent to the Congress but no action was taken in this session. This is a bill to establish an Advisory Board on Indian Affairs, to be composed of not more than fifteen leaders, both Indian and non-Indian, in various fields. In approving this recommendation, it has been my thought that such a board would serve three main purposes: (1) it would be a non-partisan group which would give the Secretary advice and information; (2) both as a board and as individuals, it would help to spread accurate information to the public about Indians and the Bureau's operations; and (3) because its members would serve staggered terms, it would be a continuing body and would have a stabilizing influence on Bureau policies. It would be my hope that the Board would prevent such violent changes in policies as have sometimes occurred in the past with each new administration.