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SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY
SENATOR JAMES ABOUREZK

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The time has come for action in meeting the needs of this country's most impoverished minority group. Surveys, studies, and experimental programs have all pointed in the same direction. It is my hope that in this session of the Congress new foundations will be laid in Federal Indian policy. This new thrust must address itself to the everyday needs of our Indian citizens.

Effective reform in Federal Indian policy must come because the programs and policies in Indian affairs in the last century have completely failed. A new Indian leadership throughout the United States has made great strides, however, in overcoming the factionalism created by past government policies, and in starting to mold the Indian people together.

In producing this reform, jobs must be first on the list. American Indians on reservations and in urban ghettos have the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Past programs, especially the OEO programs and the grant program administered by the Economic Development Administration, have been partially successful in creating employment on reservations. The well-conceived but underfunded Emergency Employment Act of 1971 has shown itself to be even more responsive to the needs of Indian communities.

But if the everyday needs of Indian people are going to be met, we are going to have to provide a job with a decent wage for Indian people wherever they live—on the reservations and in cities (where many have been sent by Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) relocation programs). I intend to do my best to see that the Congress enacts an employment program and provides funding for it at a level that will provide a job for every Indian willing to work.

Federal loan and loan guarantee financing for reservation development, funded at an adequate level, is also essential.

Frankly, I believe that programs, such as these, giving Indian people a decent chance for a job, would do more to fulfill our Congressional obligation as a trustee for Indian-Americans than any other step which we in the Congress could take.

Secondly, we need to follow through on the promises which have

been made by the President and the Congress to provide real self-government to Indians in Indian country. Some tentative steps have been made in transferring Bureau of Indian Affairs programs to Indian control. The inclusion of tribal governments in Revenue Sharing, as well as in many other Federal grant programs, is a sign of a Congressional commitment to take tribal governments seriously.

In its last session the Senate passed a bill to facilitate tribal control of BIA and Indian Health Service programs (where a tribe chooses to take this step). I am confident that new legislation in this area will be enacted in this session. While existing laws permit Indians to contract for Federal programs, these are old laws which need to be streamlined to give effect to the new spirit of Indian self-determination.

Last year the Congress passed the Indian Education Act which provides for grants to Indian tribal governments, as well as to schools educating Indian children, for programs to meet the special educational needs of Indian children. The provision for education grants to tribal governments was an especially commendable feature of this new law. In the Congress we have appropriated \$18,000,000 to get this program started in this school year, but those funds have been impounded by President Nixon.

I congratulate the *North Dakota Law Review* on its continuing interest in developments in Federal Indian policy. Indian affairs are full of action today, and hopefully the next few years will see the most constructive legislative effort in this field since 1934.

SENATOR JAMES ABOUREZK (Dem. S.D.)
*Chairman, Senate Subcommittee
on Indian Affairs*