

we have here an example of where community action and self-help was made a difference, because the American Indian was given everything but did nothing for himself. His tribal council was an elected body that had no function. The Indian could not sell his own land, could not do anything. He was considered in legal language incompetent. Yet there are 450,000 living in the United States who do not consider themselves to be incompetent. When we asked them: What do you want? What do you see coming out of the poverty program? Their first reaction was one of distrust that we were coming to provide them with more services, we were going to tell them where to go, and we were going to move them to Detroit, to Chicago, and move them off reservations, take their lands and put them in big cities where they would be poor and without friends.

We finally convinced them that this program was different, that this was their program to tell us what they were going to do and what they wanted to be done.

We had to do much convincing and many funny stories ensued; stories such as their going to superintendents and saying, "We have passed a resolution that we are in favor of Shriver and the poverty program. Get us the money." After turning down these types of resolutions and asking what they wanted, we found they wanted two things: they wanted the ability to tell us what kind of programs they thought made the most sense, and to run them. They also wanted to deal directly with Washington and not to be dealing with local offices and State offices and regional offices, and up and down the line.

We granted those two requests. It is the opinion of many people, both Indian and non-Indian, that a dent has been made and a start has been made by community action on the reservation.

Previously we have community action programs on several Indian reservations that comprise 80 percent of all American Indians living on reservations. We have gotten them to do something that they have not been able to do themselves, we have gotten them to do many things. First, we have gotten them to put together a viable group which they call the community action agency, which provides local government to a reservation. Heretofore, if you wanted to locate an industrial facility on a reservation there was no one you could go to, because there was no administrative experience, there were no people who really had the background of what it takes to put together a going organization. The community action agency today can provide this.

I met in my office about a month ago a gentleman from a large missile company and he said—

I understand the Federal Government has all kinds of programs, all kinds of ways of helping industry locate on Indian reservations.

I said—

That is true.

He said—

I can't go to the Department of Labor and I can't go to HEW. I can't go to BIA, I can't go all over Washington just to put a plant on the reservation.

He said—

I am a businessman. I have to put a plant there that is going to make money. That is how I get my promotions.