

Mr. REID. Commissioner Bennett, could I ask you, just to put it in perspective, what is the total now of the American Indian work force, and what percentage are unemployed?

Mr. BENNETT. The percentage that are unemployed is in the neighborhood of 40 percent of the work force.

Mr. REID. And that is out of a total of how many, approximately?

Mr. BENNETT. The total Indian population on or near the reservation is in the neighborhood of 400,000, and we have the total work force here, 130,895.

Mr. REID. That is the work force?

Mr. BENNETT. Yes, male and female.

Mr. REID. And of that, 40 percent are unemployed?

Mr. BENNETT. Yes.

Mr. REID. What are the skills that would appear to be most needed, and most related to lasting job opportunities?

Mr. BENNETT. Well, it relates to their overall social and skill development, because the Indian labor force, for many years, depended upon their jobs in industry, migrant work, around and close to reservations, so between this kind of work and other opportunities available, they more or less had a relatively stabilized economy.

With the mechanization of agriculture, we had the deepest inroad upon the employment of Indian people, and in order to qualify them for skills, we have the adult vocational training program, and the relocation program, which involves employment, relocation for employment opportunities, but more important than that, we have started a new program which takes into consideration the training of the whole family, where the wage earner is given training to—as a matter of fact, it is prevocational training, so that after this training period, they can be trained for a skilled job, and the wife is trained in home management, and budgeting, and also as a secondary wage earner in the family. The children are trained in their public schools that are available, and we have preschool training, and it is entire family training of the pilot program.

Mr. REID. Now how does the Office of Economic Opportunity relate most explicitly to results in this area?

Mr. BENNETT. Well, the Office of Economic Opportunity has been working with us in the training opportunities which we developed on the reservation, but what I was talking about is in the training program off the reservation.

Mr. REID. Training off the reservation.

Mr. BENNETT. And on the reservation, we have cooperative programs in housing, for instance, where the Office of Economic Opportunity contributes to the program to provide training for people who are engaged in building homes on the reservation, and as has been pointed out in the testimony, we have a commitment for the engineering and the preparation of the site, in matters of this kind, and there are other agencies involved, too, but here is their greatest contribution as far as the Bureau is concerned, in training opportunities on the reservation.

Mr. REID. Do you have a correlation, Mr. Commissioner, between unemployment and school dropouts? In other words, does the basic education part of what Mrs. Green was talking about earlier directly relate to these figures?