

my testimony, that has to give thought to their problems day by day and hour by hour in a way that we do not.

Mr. STEIGER. In your testimony, also on page 7, you said that "economic opportunity programs are enabling Indian groups to more quickly identify and resolve their own problems."

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has had the responsibility for Indians for, as you indicated, over a century. Now, what is it that OEO has done that BIA could not do and did not do and why did you not request from the Congress the kind of authority necessary to more quickly identify and resolve the problems of Indians through BIA?

Secretary UDALL. Let me give you one very good example from a personal experience which will show you what I mean in this regard.

The OEO, in one of the major grants they have made to the largest Indian tribe, which occupies the largest land area which is as large as West Virginia, incidentally, the Navajos, made a legal grant that set up a legal aid program. This is really much more than what we normally think of, people just getting advice, because you are dealing with people who have every little awareness of our legal system as well as their own legal system that they are trying to develop.

Now, this is something that, if you had left it up to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to initiate, I doubt that it would have been initiated at this point. It was badly needed; it was very important to carry it out. It has been very well funded; it is now in its second year; and I think it is going to be a highly successful program.

Since legal aid has been one of the major innovative things that OEO has tried out in poverty areas generally, they said logically are there Indian areas where we should try out this idea to see what we can do in terms of educating people as to their rights and helping them to protect their rights.

This is where OEO provided an innovative thrust that I don't think the Bureau of Indian Affairs would have under normal circumstances, and to the benefit of the Indians.

Mr. STEIGER. You indicated, if I can just clarify one little bit further, in your statement, on pages 7 and 8, "With the coordination of the Office of Economic Opportunity." That is not really quite what you mean, if I understand the answer you gave; it is still BIA that must have the greatest share of the effort to help the Indians in conjunction with OEO. Is that correct?

Secretary UDALL. So far as the Indians are concerned, the Indian people, their future, their problems, I think that the Indian Bureau of necessity has to have the paramount role and OEO is providing a new thrust and is entering into the picture. But certainly they are not coordinating Indian affairs. This is the job of the Indian Commissioner. But they are coordinators of the overall poverty program.

To come back to the example I used a moment ago, if they are going to do something about aiding the impoverished people of the country, getting better protection of their legal rights, understanding their legal rights, they have the paramount responsibility in this field; they do the coordination. They, in this instance, decided really what should be done in this limited area so far as the Indian people are concerned.

The answer is a little bit complicated, but my answer is yes and no.