

A related criticism was brought up in a Council meeting in June attended by members of the OED staff. The Tribal President said that a number of needy youths who had just graduated from high school had been refused NYC jobs. He and other Council members thought this set a bad example to other students, since it seemed to punish them for graduating while rewarding their friends who had dropped out or failed. The NYC Director replied that the NYC philosophy was to help those first who needed help the most, and that they were aware of the problem and were working on it.

As of July, the NYC staff included a director, a counselor, two supervisors, and a secretary, all full-time, and an accountant who also served as accountant for the CAP programs. A third supervisor was being sought. Most of the earlier problems still cause difficulty, however. The need to find adequate work tasks for more than three hundred enrollees (as of July 1966) creates strain on the volunteer supervisors an often light workloads for the enrollees. A CAP Nursery School teacher said that she agreed to supervise five enrollees assigned to keep her school swept and clean. With that many working twenty hours a week, they reportedly "get underfoot." One BIA branch foreman said that he would like very much to teach the fundamentals of his trade to the NYC workers that he had agreed to supervise, but that there were too many of them and they usually did not stay on the job long enough. With a little training, the foreman thought they would be useful to him and to themselves; but as it is, he said, there is not much for them to do. Another BIA official said that a girl assigned to him as an office worker could become a good secretary if her bad spelling were corrected. He told members of the NYC staff that he would be glad to assign the girl spelling lessons if they would provide a spelling book. They said program guidelines allowed no purchases of this sort. (A VISTA Volunteer who was present offered to try to borrow a spelling text for the purpose.)

At a meeting for volunteer supervisors, a number of them raised the issue of their inability to provide the enrollees with useful work skills. One man asked what the enrollees were supposed to be learning. An NYC staff member replied that learning to keep regular hours was very important training. He said that the enrollees soon found that they would be docked for hours missed, and that if they were absent from work too many times without good reason, they could be dismissed. (The NYC Director stated that absenteeism was a problem among the enrollees. He reported that they periodically go "psychologically berserk" and disappear from the job for days, letting off tensions that have built up. Absenteeism was reportedly highest around Christmas time.)

Some Sioux adults complain that NYC wages have increased the drinking problem among reservation youth. Though the complaint may be largely motivated by a desire for an adult work program to replace the NYC, it seems to have basis in fact. Of fifty-five people arrested on the reservation for being drunk and disorderly over the Fourth of July weekend, forty were NYC enrollees. In June the NYC staff requested of the BIA Law and Order Branch that NYC enrollees who were arrested be treated as special cases and that the NYC be allowed to mete out any punishment given.

The Chief of the Tribal Police Force reported that petty theft had been cut in half since the NYC program started. Police officials feel that giving the youths something to do, coupled with enough money to reduce the likelihood of theft, has helped to keep them out of trouble.

Another clear benefit of the program has been that some enrollees were encouraged to save enough from their wages to buy back-to-school clothing. (Many enrollees elect to let NYC set up savings accounts for them, with parental permission.) Of six enrollees the HSR researchers knew well enough to be assured of frank answers, two said they bought school clothes with their savings accounts. (The six enrollees made it clear, however, that they thought the counseling and lectures were a minor annoyance.) Some fortunate enrollees are learning skills that will make them employable. Reportedly, a few enrollees assigned to the PHS hospital in Pine Ridge town have been trained as laboratory technicians.

It is too early to assess how successful the NYC program will be in achieving its primary goal, steering youths into productive lives. Clearly, many youths resist being "programmed." One had agreed to go to Job Corps camp in order to keep working on the NYC, then managed to miss necessary appointments, forget birth certificates, and fill out forms incorrectly for over a month to delay going. Many youths agree to go back to school but fail to do so or manage to have themselves suspended, meanwhile working in the NYC as long as they can "get away