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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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19-STATE GOVERNORS' COUNCIL TOLD OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIAN SELF-HELP

The new Economic Opportunity Act offers American Indians their greatest chance for self-help, Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr., last night told the 19-State Governors' Interstate Indian Council.

Carver, whose six-Bureau supervision includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs, addressed the Council's seventeenth annual convention in Denver, Colorado. The member States have interest and responsibilities for Indian affairs.

"The old cry that the Federal Government should withdraw--that there should be less government--is a blind and shortsighted one in the West," he said. "It is strange that this is where most of it is heard.

"The point has now been reached, I am convinced, at which further accomplishments, further planning, will depend very greatly upon increased coordination among local, State and Federal Governments--and upon more and more participation by the Indians themselves."

Assistant Secretary Carver said "many Indian people themselves are unaware of how greatly their ultimate destinies rest with themselves," adding that they "contain within themselves the basic elements for their own resurgence as a self-supporting segment of our society."

He said the Economic Opportunity Act, embodying President Johnson's anti-poverty crusade, offers Indians increased opportunities for employment, education, agricultural improvements, better health, new industries and a fuller life.

"The Indians are a proud and able people," Mr. Carver told the Council. "They don't want handouts. They want, in their innermost hearts, to be in control of their own destinies. This hope can become reality both for the Indians who prefer to live on their reservations and for those who prefer to leave. In either case, the thing they need remember--or learn, if they have not yet learned it--is that poverty is not necessarily the price to pay for retaining their Indian identity."

The Governors' Council includes representatives of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

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