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INTERIOR RECOMMENDS INCREASE IN INDIAN VOCATIONAL FUNDS

The Department of the Interior has recommended that Congress pass a bill to increase appropriation authorization for Indian vocational education.

Labeling the current vocational training program as "one of the stable contributing factors in solving Indian problems," the Department said it is giving more emphasis to it. A bill now in Congress would increase the annual authorization from $15 to $25 million.

"The program is extremely popular among the younger generation of Indians," said a Department statement, "and we anticipate that there will be an increase in demand for these services in the near future."

Typical fiscal year expenditures for the program show $4,177,872 in 1962; $6,557,974 in 1964; $11,372,536 in 1966; and an estimated $13,328,161 for 1967.

During fiscal 1966, over 5,000 heads of families or single persons were given training, with more than 2,000 completing their courses, 888 discontinuing training, and a balance of 2,075 still in training July 1. In addition, 1,652 Indians were placed in on-the-job training positions.

According to the projected educational figures for fiscal 1969 from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which plans the programs, there will be about 5,400 Indian high school graduates annually, plus an unknown number of drop-outs.

Many of the graduates and all of the drop-outs will need vocational training, according to Bureau education experts, to compete successfully for jobs. The expected increase, together with more opportunities for on-the-job training resulting from increased industrial activity on or near Indian reservations, will make the additional funds necessary, the Bureau reported.

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