Maine and New York. One expects to
go on forever over and over into paradise.
Our Best Braves rode with him to a
Greater Destiny.

Warriors love a jau de barres—coup in the afternoon,
afterward speaking eloquently to the people,
and they listened.

Whirling blankets of grey dust enshroud
the words of ancient prison-wearing Patriarchs;
White Men, shooting and stabbing while Black Kettle flew the
Stars and Stripes;

White Men drunk with the clang of railroads
devoid of reason, not wanting to hear the true
outspoken words of Brave Heart.
The war-bonneted, Brown Culture trapped in the quagmire
of policy and commitment.

A way of life annihilated by the gripping forces of progress,
Spiritual law and order left to bleach on an arid anthill,
Humaness dying agonizingly,
America may regret her modern hatred of
the Dark people the cowboy's insolence,
our programmatic substitution for traditional values:

We may weep for wind-swept sand, dawn-crowned mesas,
the buffalo dances of Mandans and Arikaras.

Sacajawea "danced with extravagant joy"
said Lewis and Clark in historic reflections.

Now Bird Woman has vanished on wings bearing Shoshonean
laughter accented across lifeless prairie dog mounds
filled with rusted Jefferson "peace medals."
The Mandans wail, singing chants of fatalism
on the Missouri River:

"We live in fear,
we welcome death,
our children covered with spotted red ochre,
our children covered with dirt.
We will vanish from the earth,
we will lose our bark houses,
we will lose our loved ones,
the White Man will cover us up with his smiles, his promises.
The White Man will burn
our boats, our deal.
The White Man will kill us."
Brave Heart wept and then rode away into
solitude so profound we saw only the
richness of the vegetation and wild animals.

The drum was beaten only by great men,
yea, the chant was sung throughout the camp.
So, Brown People began the procession of the calumet—
a never ending circles of peace and harmony.
We have heard his death song.
We lament Brave Heart's journey to the sea
we will never forget him.

**FOREWORD**

The American vision of itself is of a nation of citizens determining
their own destiny; of cultural difference flourishing in an atmosphere of mutual respect; of diverse people shaping their lives and
the lives of their children. This Subcommittee has undertaken an
examination of a major failure in this policy: the education of Indian
children. We have chosen a course of learning as obvious as it has
been ignored. We have listened to the Indian people speak for themselves about the problems they confront, and about the changes that
must be made in seeking effective education for their children.

The responsibility for the education of Indian children is primarily
in the hands of the Federal Government. Of the 160,000 Indian
children in schools—public, private, mission, and Federal—one-third
are in federally operated institutions. In addition, the Federal Gov-
ernment has a substantial responsibility for Indian children enrolled
in public schools. Under the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934, the Secretary
of the Interior was authorized to contract with States and other
agencies to provide an effective education for Indian children. Last
year, more than 60,000 Indian children were covered by this act. We
have, moreover, committed ourselves to helping Indian education
under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and have included
Indian children in the impacted-aid formulas under Public
Laws 874 and 815. To a substantial extent, then, the quality and effective-
ness of Indian education is a test of this Government's understand-
ning and commitment.

Has the Federal Government lived up to its responsibility? The
extensive record of this Subcommittee, seven volumes of hearings, five
committee prints, and this report, constitute a major indictment of
our failure.

Drop-out rates are twice the national average in both public and
Federal schools. Some school districts have dropout rates
approaching 100 percent;

Achievement levels of Indian children are 2 to 3 years below
those of white students; and the Indian child falls progressively
further behind the longer he stays in school;

Only 1 percent of Indian children in elementary school have
Indian teachers or principals;

One-fourth of elementary and secondary school teachers—by
their own admission—would prefer not to teach Indian children; and

Indian children, more than any other minority group, believe
themselves to be "below average" in intelligence.

What are the consequences of our educational failure? What hap-
pens to an Indian child who is forced to abandon his own pride and
future and confront a society in which he has been offered neither a place nor a hope? Our failure to provide an effective education for the American Indian has condemned him to a life of poverty and despair.

Fifty thousand Indian families live in unsanitary, dilapidated dwellings, many in huts, shanties, even abandoned automobiles; the average Indian income is $1,500, 75 percent below the national average; the unemployment rate among Indians is nearly 40 percent—more than 10 times the national average; the average age of death of the American Indian is 44 years; for all other Americans it is 65; the infant mortality rate is twice the national average; and thousands of Indians have migrated into cities only to find themselves untrained for jobs and unprepared for urban life. Many of them return to the reservation more disillusioned and defeated than when they left.

These cold statistics illuminate a national tragedy and a national disgrace. They demonstrate that the "first American" has become the "last American" in terms of opportunity for employment, education, a decent income, and the chance for a full and rewarding life. There are no quick and easy solutions in this tragic state of affairs; but clearly, effective education lies at the heart of any lasting solution. And that education should no longer be one which assumes that cultural differences mean cultural inferiority. The findings and recommendations contained in this report are a call for excellence, a reversal of past failures, and a commitment to a national program of priority for Indian education in terms of education and opportunity.

Many people have made major contributions to the work of the subcommittee and its final report. Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Senator Wayne Morse, and Senator Ralph Yarborough have all served as chairman of the subcommittee, and contributed their vision and passionate concern to its endeavors. The subcommittee has benefited greatly from the interest and good counsel of its members on the minority side.

This has truly been a bipartisan effort which is clearly reflected in the unanimous agreement on 59 out of the 60 subcommittee recommendations.

Despite a series of tragic events and unavoidable delays, the subcommittee has carried out an extensive schedule of field investigations and hearings. It has provided a mandate and a blueprint for change, so that the American Indian can regain its rightful place in our society.

I would particularly like to express my appreciation to the staff director of the subcommittee, Mr. Adrian L. Parmeter, who has served the subcommittee with great commitment and competence from the beginning.

EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Special Subcommittee on Indian Education.

OCTOBER 30, 1969.

SUMMARY

For more than 2 years the members of this subcommittee have been asking how well American Indians are educated. We have traveled to all parts of the country; we have visited Indians in their homes and in their schools; we have listened to Indians, to Government officials, and to experts; and we have looked closely into every aspect of the educational opportunities this Nation offers its Indian citizens.

Our work fills 4,077 pages in seven volumes of hearings and 450 pages in five volumes of committee prints. This report is the distillate of this work.

We are shocked at what we discovered. Others before us were shocked. They recommended and made changes. Others after us will likely be shocked, too—despite our recommendations and efforts at reform. For there is so much to do—rights to wrongs, errors to correct—our own recommendations, concerned as they are with education alone, need implementation across the board of Indian life.

We have developed plans after page of statistics. These cold figures mark a stain on our national conscience, a stain which has spread slowly for hundreds of years. They tell a story, to be sure. But they cannot tell the whole story. They cannot, for example, tell of the despair, the frustration, the hopelessness, the poignancy, of children who want to learn but are not taught; of adults who try and read but have no one to teach them; of families which want to stay together but are forced apart; or of 9-year-olds who want to learn but are sent thousands of miles away to remote and alien boarding schools.

We have seen what these conditions do to Indian children and Indian families. The sights are not pleasant.

We have concluded that our national policies for educating American Indians are a failure of major proportions. They have not offered Indian children—or in years past or today—an educational opportunity anywhere near equal to that offered the great bulk of American children. Past generations of lawmakers and administrators have failed the American Indian. Our own generation thus faces a challenge—we can continue the unacceptable policies and programs of the past or we can recognize our failures, renew our commitments, and invest our efforts with new energy. It is this latter course that the subcommittee chooses. We have made 60 separate recommendations. If they are all carried out in force and effect, then we believe that all American Indians, children and adults, will have the opportunity to grow to their full potential. Decent education has thus been denied Indians in the past, and they have fallen far short of matching their promise with performance. But this need not always be so. Creative, imaginative, and above all, relevant educational experiences can blot the stain on our national