Indians are many peoples. Found in every state in the Union, Indians are forest people, plains people, people of the swamps and everglades, of the snowy north and the arid Southwest. And they have developed a wide variety of cultures which are the products of these different backgrounds, different histories, and a wide range of endowments. Now all of a sudden—for Indians were declared full citizens of the United States only in 1924—within one generation they are expected to adjust themselves as citizens in a nation which is having difficulty in making its own adjustment in a rapidly changing world. Indians in this situation face an unparalleled dilemma. The oldest Americans, their problem is in many ways that of the most recent immigrants for they are aliens in appearance, language, religion and in concepts of government. They look like foreigners as we see them in their natural habitat, in their tribal dress, practicing their ancestral religious rites. All this is true in varying degrees throughout the United States, but we in New Mexico have in three Indian peoples examples of what all American Indians must face and how they are facing it. These are the Pueblos, the Navajos, and the Apaches.

All across the continent the white man’s advance has pushed Indians back onto poorer and poorer lands. An interesting exception to this—perhaps the only one—is the case of our Pueblo Indians whose lands were granted to them by the Spanish empire after the conquest. These

Born in New Mexico of a pioneer family, Erna Ferguson has written more than a dozen books on the Southwest and Latin America. She has been a good and knowledgeable friend of the Indians for many years. Her volume on Indian ceremonials, “Dancing Gods,” was reprinted last year by the University of New Mexico Press. The substance of this article was originally presented by Miss Ferguson on July 28, 1958, in the series of Lectures Under the Stars on the University of New Mexico campus.
grants were confirmed by the United States Government after Uncle Sam took over in the middle of the nineteenth century. This had the extraordinary result that the Pueblo Indians still own some of the best land in the middle Rio Grande Valley. Navajos and Apaches did not fare so well, especially the Navajos who were placed on a reservation that lacks enough water to support a decent standard of living. So they have faced almost insuperable difficulties in the basic matter of just keeping alive. Moreover these New Mexico tribes, like all Indians throughout the Americas have faced one overwhelming problem that has plagued them ever since the white man first took note of them. This problem is the white man himself.

The white man, the European, wherever he goes, presents an appalling problem to every people he encounters. This seems due to certain peculiarities which the white man exhibits generally, especially in his relationships with alien peoples. These peculiarities may be summed up in one word. Rightness. The white man is always right. His government, his religion, his customs are not only the right, but the only right way of doing things. So he sees it as his God-given destiny to force his way, down to the most trivial button and haircut, upon every people he meets. The American Indian, from coast to coast, has met this character as conqueror, converter, land-grabber, and do-gooder; in government, in organization, and as individuals, whose effect on the Indian has varied from downright evil to pretty good. It is certainly true that the best white men have uniformly acted from the noblest possible motives; doing what they considered best for the Indian. Even this best has often brought hardship to the Indian because of certain errors in approach which hamper the white man’s best intentioned efforts.

The white man’s basic error, which has colored much evil he has wrought, comes down to his lack of respect for people he has considered savages. At worst this attitude has resulted in our government’s very bad record of breaking treaties entered into in good faith and honorably kept by the so-called savages but disregarded by people considering themselves superior. At best, lack of respect leads to rigidity of mind and methods and a tendency to move too fast. Why delay in making the right prevail? Consequently the white man has consistently failed to think his programs through to their ultimate effect on the Indian. There are dozens of examples of this. Destruction of the Indians’ ancient religions has led to a deep distrust of the white man and to the loss of fine cultural values which might have enriched the white
man's civilization. Breaking up reservations and giving land to Indians in fee simple has often resulted in permitting unscrupulous whites to trick ignorant or ill-advised Indians out of lands held for them in trust, thus lowering their dignity as tribes, their security as individuals. Reducing flocks to save grazing lands, while good in theory, has often deprived families of their sole source of livelihood. Urging Indians to move into cities when they are unprepared to cope with industrial life has often forced them into the lowest economic class, underpaid or on relief. New Mexico's history is dotted with instances of these basic errors in the white man's approach.

The sixteenth century Spanish conquerors saw the Indians as savages whom they defeated for the noble purpose of bringing them into the sacred realm of Christian civilization. Similar motives prevailed when the American army under Kit Carson defeated the Navajos in 1864 and when the last Apache bands were finally rounded up about 1900 by young officers who were to demonstrate in France in 1918 how much strategy they had learned from the Apaches.

Conquerors were in every case accompanied by missionaries. Spain's Franciscan friars, marching with the conquerors, directed the Indians in the building of Catholic missions. The United States, preaching freedom of religion, opened the door to many Protestant denominations whose missionaries tried to turn Catholic Indians into Protestants. An old Navajo summed it up: "Too many Jesuses." And not long ago the Rio Grande Pueblos were being offered salvation by missionaries of eleven different denominations. Indians have as a rule accepted new faiths while continuing to worship in their own way. An old Apache once said: "There, are many trails to the mountain." A couple of centuries before the Constitution of the United States guaranteed freedom of religion, a Hopi Indian explained to a conquering Spaniard that his people asked only to follow their own beliefs. This right was to be denied even by the United States Government which construed freedom of religion in Indian schools as permitting every Indian child his choice of Christian churches.

An interesting test of the freedom of religion tenet is posed by the Native American Church, founded in 1918 by Oklahoma Indians and now organized and active in eleven western states. It stems from the peyote cult of certain Mexican Indians and involves taking peyote, the button of a cactus which contains mescaline and produces hallucinations with marvelous color effects. There have been many efforts to outlaw the use of peyote and to suppress the Native American Church.
But chemical analyses have established that peyote is not a narcotic, is not habit forming or otherwise deleterious. Its immediate effect seems good and the cult may help in solving the problem of drunkenness as peyote takers do not drink. Otherwise the Native American Church teaches a broad monotheism not unlike Unitarian beliefs. Indians are quoted as saying: "Christ is for white men; peyote for Indians."

After considerable controversy the New Mexico State Legislature, in March of this year, passed a bill legalizing the use of peyote for religious purposes.

More like conquerors than missionaries, though with different weapons, have been the land grabbers. They too have justified themselves as acting from the best possible motives. Isn’t it best for good lands to belong to white men who can farm them properly? Laws have even helped in putting Indian lands into white men’s hands. A law of 1887 gave small parcels of lands to Indians in the hope of hastening acculturation. But the result was that ignorant Indians soon sold or lost their land to white men who understood the laws better. This law is still sometimes invoked with unfortunate results. Some encroachments have been innocent, as when descendants of Spanish colonials were found living peacefully on Pueblo land grants. Many such cases were due to honest errors in surveying land or recording sales.

These Pueblo lands cases resulted in the formation of the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs when Senator Bursum of New Mexico introduced a bill in Congress which tended to favor the white (and voting) contestants. The bill was defeated and a Pueblo Lands Board established which held long hearings and finally rendered decisions generally considered fair. The New Mexico Association has continued to give more than thirty years of sound aid to Indians by providing lawyers, nurses, offering guidance in organization, in appearances before Congressional committees, in work with men in military service and veterans, in a youth association, and in many other ways.

Certain Americans had long tried to help Indians in various ways, individually or in organizations. Some of them were Indian agents like John Clum, Apache agent in Arizona who could distinguish so well between good Indians and bad Indians that he enlisted many Apache Scouts in a force that actually brought about the defeat of the Apache Chief Geronimo. Leo Crane of Albuquerque as Superintendent of the Pueblos, stood out manfully for the rights of the Indians in his district. Chester Farris, working with different tribes won the confidence and
friendship of Indians wherever he went. Many other Indian agents and superintendents have fought for Indians’ rights against misguided or predatory whites. The Indians have had many unofficial friends, some of whom have left their own records or been honored by others. Unfortunately there have also been individuals who have used the woes of Indians to publicize or even enrich themselves. Organizations to help and protect the Indians have been more generally successful. The earliest were, not surprisingly, established by Quakers as much as a century ago.

The most effective organization working on a nation-wide basis is the American Association on Indian Affairs, headed by Oliver La Farge, novelist, anthropologist, and student of Indians and their history. This Association has entered many a legal battle to protect individual Indians or whole tribes. Recently it has been conducting an active campaign against the apparent tendency of the U. S. Indian Bureau to permit white men to purchase Indian tribal lands without giving the Indians the first chance to buy.

The tribes involved in this dispute are playing a large and very intelligent part in it, a situation that highlights our government’s radically changed attitude toward Indians and their status. Conquered as savages they were placed on reservations as the responsibility of the government. Decisions were made for them, education was handed to them, their property was controlled by government agents, they were treated like incompetents. Then as broadminded people observed Indians in action, noted their ability to grasp even a complicated legal problem, their dignity and skill in presenting their case even before a Congressional committee, a world-shaking idea was born. Why not ask the Indians? Why not discuss their problems and their possible solutions with these intelligent people? So, in 1924, the All Pueblo Council was formed in New Mexico as one of the best side effects of the defeat of the Bursum Bill.

Since time immemorial—long before the arrival of the first Spaniards, the pueblos had existed as self-governing, independent city-states. They were called nations in the earliest documents, they signed treaties with both Spain and the United States. Individual pueblos were lightly related by the several languages they still speak—Tiwa, Tewa, Keres—but Spanish was their first lingua franca as English is now. The All Pueblo Council is informal but effective. It meets regularly, has an elected president, keeps careful records, and is well informed about all federal and state laws that affect Pueblo life.
Organizing Navajos was not so easy as there was no precedent for a union of the many wandering bands. But in 1930 the Navajo Tribal Council was organized under a thoroughly modern constitution. This body of seventy-two elected men and women meets regularly, hears reports from its many committees, and takes action. Above all, the Council decides how to use its wealth which is considerable now that both oil and uranium have been discovered on the Navajo Reservation. The Apaches have no over-all governing body, though Apaches on the several reservations in Arizona and New Mexico are organized under elected officials and act very effectively.

The great question remains: How are these Indians adapting to the modern world as individuals and as groups? How much can they do for themselves? How much guidance from the white man do they need? The replies depend upon who answers, what Indians are in mind, and above all what period one is talking about. The Indian scene is changing so fast that what applied at the end of World War I is not at all true today; even conditions that existed when Indian GI's came home in 1945 are altogether different in 1958. But some generalizations can be made.

Indians are young people. Over 50 percent of them are under twenty years of age. These young people are being forced into modern life by many of the same pressures that affect the young white man. Their lands are inadequate to support a growing population, they can earn more in industry than as farmers; they long to better their living conditions and to see their children advance. But they also feel the pull of their inherited traditions which involve religious beliefs and tribal customs.

This paradox is sharply evident among the Pueblos whose young men are working in Albuquerque and Santa Fe as mechanics, at Los Alamos as trained technicians in many lines; quite a few have gone into trade selling Indian crafts and even making a business of Indian songs and dances.

There are nineteen pueblos in New Mexico and naturally they differ in many regards as people always differ even in fairly homogeneous groups. But they have enough similarities to make possible a consideration of the Pueblo people as a whole. Traditionally their governments were sedentary in character, dominated by shamans, generally old men who understood the ways of men and of nature and the importance of keeping men and nature in harmony. This lies back of the Pueblo
saying: “If our hearts are right, the rain will come.” Such leaders are naturally influential even in the selection of elected officials as well as in every detail of individual life. The extent of this priestly control and of the younger people’s struggle against it largely determines the status of a pueblo as conservative or progressive.

Taos, generally considered one of the most conservative pueblos, with a population of 1,210, has held out against electricity, telephones, a water system or any form of sanitation. Women still dip their water picturesquely but laboriously from Pueblo Creek. All boys must be initiated into tribal organizations at age eighteen and undergo a year and a half of training, and the month of August remains a sacred time when no wheel turns in the pueblo and the people go to their sacred Blue Lake under Pueblo Peak for secret ceremonies. But much of this is breaking down. A blacktop road, built with state funds, will connect the pueblo with the state in more ways than one. Children attend the pueblo day school and many go on to high school in Santa Fe.

Santo Domingo, the largest of the Rio Grande pueblos, is conservative, but it is the site of the meetings of the All Pueblo Council, its people trade widely with other Indians and with whites; many of them live and work in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and intermarriage with other pueblos is not unusual. The Council, though generally conservative, is often persuaded by younger men to approve progressive measures. They soon saw the advantage of having their children educated along with white children in public schools and even gave pueblo land for the building of a county junior high school which of course serves all the children of the area.

This school integration program is based on an Act of Congress of 1936 (Johnson-O’Malley Act) which provides money to assist in education of Indian children living on Indian-owned and tax-free land. New Mexico could not afford to take advantage of this law until 1951 because most Indians lived in districts too poor to finance the additional school buildings required. But after 1951, a program was undertaken at the request of the Pueblos. Every pueblo voted to enter its children in the public schools as did both Navajos and Apaches. The program has on the whole gone smoothly, though it has been found advisable to make special provision for helping Indian children to learn and to use English.

An interesting example of the Indian’s reaction to this program is offered by Santo Domingo Pueblo. Its Governor and Council cooperate fully with the authorities of the Bernalillo High School which their
children attend; but they have their reservations too. They have set up certain standards which might be worth the consideration of some white parents. Santo Domingo children are in school, the elders say, to learn and not to play. They are not allowed to go downtown during lunch period or after school. They are permitted to take part in sports and social affairs, but when they do they are chaperoned by Pueblo elders. The bus driver, a skilled silversmith who volunteers his time, collects the children in the pueblo every morning, keeps an eye on them all day and rounds them up to go home in the afternoon. Santo Domingo officials back up and stand ready to assist school discipline at all times but seem to have some doubt of its efficacy. They disapprove of much they see white children do: promiscuous dating and dancing, hanging around in soft drink parlors which are suspected of selling hard liquor, and even marijuana under the counter. Whether this is true or not, it is what the elders think and what they propose to guard their children against.

Taos and Santo Domingo illustrate the conservative attitude found to some degree in all pueblos. They value their old beliefs and customs and hope to preserve as much as they can of the old ways. But they all adopt some modern ways. Even the most conservative pueblos use farm machinery, many younger men own pick-up trucks or touring cars, many put in water pipes and electric wires as soon as they can.

Five pueblos have worked out long range plans to meet such needs as the proper handling of natural resources, including the human. They have consulted experts in land management, in education, health, and law and order. They work through committees and hire experts as needed. They began with lawyers who helped them set up their governments and prepare appeals to Congress; they have gone on to hire engineers, agriculturists, and even business organizers and researchers. They seem to have adopted the business tycoon’s dictum: “You can always hire brains.”

Isleta, thirteen miles south of Albuquerque, is an excellent example of the progressive pueblo and of people who began early to think for themselves. During the 1930's, when New Mexico was suffering from drought as well as depression, the federal government bought thousands of moribund cattle and gave them to the pueblos as food. Dick Abeyta, a man with a long view, proposed that instead of slaughtering those animals, the pueblo should pasture them on their irrigated valley lands, acquire some good bulls, and breed up a herd. This appealed to the sound sense of the Council and to the Indian’s basic respect for the
ways of nature. So it was done, and Isleta now owns a good herd as well as productive farm lands. Many individual Isletans now work in many trades in Albuquerque, belong to unions (Isletans are said to dominate the painters union) and work as highly trained technicians in the atomic center. Many of these prefer to commute to their adobe Isleta home, now equipped with all modern conveniences.

Santa Clara and San Ildefonso are so near Los Alamos that many of their men work in that atomic city, not only as laborers, but many of them as skilled technicians. This brings money into the pueblos and also ideas. Santa Clara is developing the ancient Pueblo of Puye as a tourist attraction where a Pueblo guide will talk about his ancestors and their culture and incidentally see that white visitors are kept in line. San Ildefonso wisely develops its distinctive black pottery which has brought fame to the pueblo and foreign decorations to certain potters such as Maria Martinez whose name is as well known as any in New Mexico. Her son has a crafts shop. Many young San Ildefonsos have gone off to distant schools and colleges. Community efforts include a blacktop road, repair of fences, building of a recreation center, and rebuilding the church which had been allowed to fall into ruins by the predominantly white congregation.

Laguna Pueblo, forty miles west of Albuquerque, has long ranked as a progressive pueblo. As long ago as the eighties, when railroad tracks were being laid along the route that later became the Santa Fe, the Laguna Council made a deal with the Atlantic and Pacific Railway that assured Laguna men work on the railroad. Consequently Lagunas are found all along the Santa Fe from eastern Kansas to California and Lagunas have been educated in many states as far east as Carlisle, Pennsylvania. But recently Laguna, which comprises six villages with some 3,650 inhabitants, has been dramatically pitched into the future. In 1955 uranium was discovered on Laguna land and large companies rushed in seeking leases. The Council, representing all six villages, realized that they needed help; several of them spoke no English. So they appointed a Finance and Planning Committee of fourteen younger men all of whom spoke good English and had had experience in the white man's world.

This committee headed by Ulysses Paisano, an employee of the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, made a careful study of the bids offered and with the advice of the tribal attorneys—Paul A. Larrozolo of Albuquerque and Richard Shifter of Washington, made a five year contract
with the Anaconda Copper Mining Company with privilege of renewal. The Company also agreed to hire Lagunas for all jobs they could fill and to train Lagunas in many techniques. Laguna was now assured of an income of approximately one million dollars a year. Naturally, with all that money in sight there was much pressure for a per capita distribution of funds. But the Council, advised by the committee, steadfastly refused immediate distribution, though it earmarked about one million dollars for possible later distribution with the proviso that any money allotted to children under sixteen should be held in trust for their education.

This windfall naturally brought up the question of who is a Laguna. People who had shown no interest when the pueblo was poor now advanced strong claims to being Lagunas. So it was decided to base membership in the tribe on a roll of Lagunas prepared in 1940 and used as the basis for voting on a new constitution adopted in that year. To take care of Lagunas who had married out, children with one Laguna parent were eligible. Then came a further question. How about youngsters born, say in Germany or Japan? (Laguna GI's had served around the world.) So a neat little phrase was added. Anybody born "in wedlock" of one parent who figured in that 1940 roll is accepted as a Laguna. In the years since this ruling has been adopted over 5,000 applications for membership have been received; about 3,200 have been approved.

The Finance and Planning Committee, looking far ahead, set up a long-range plan. They recommended that all royalties should be invested in interest-bearing bonds, stocks, and securities and only that income be used for current needs. Every point had to be made clear to every council member; a man might not know English, but he would vote for nothing he did not understand. Asked how he met this difficulty, Mr. Paisano smiled: "I drew pictures." And he showed a sketch of a pile of dollars, spouting an income to be caught in boxes labelled government bonds, corporate bonds, mutual trust companies, savings, and real estate and other investments. Below this is a box labeled "earnings from investments." This growing capital had topped six million dollars in 1958, five years after the discovery of uranium on Laguna land. Mr. Paisano's chart shows streams of money flowing into current expenses listed as "per capita distribution, dividends etc., education aid; improvements, including a tribal building; sanitation, domestic water, etc.; social aid, loans, welfare; operational expenses." Anybody could understand this, and building capital appealed to the
canny good sense of the old leaders. One of them made his own verbal sketch. "It grows like a snowball," he said.

Individual Lagunas, while their leaders are safeguarding their future, are doing well with plenty of wage work in the uranium field to supplement their traditional earnings from stock-raising and wages on the railroad and in many towns. They are buying farm machinery, trucks, and cars and improving their homes with plumbing where possible and with electricity for light, power, and many household aids. All this has probably contributed to Laguna's claim to the best health record of any pueblo. Dr. John Cobb of the U. S. Public Health Service said: "It may be better than that of any town of its size in the state."

A beautiful civic center, planned by an Albuquerque architect, fits charmingly into the old hillside pueblo whose dusty white houses rise to the dusty white mission church against the deep blue sky. Their new building will house offices for the governor, secretary and treasurer, an assembly hall, a small museum, and "a law and order office." The Laguna leaders hope to organize a tribal court with a judge and police officers appointed by the Council to handle all minor violations. Serious offenses will go to the federal courts.

Lagunas dream of having their own professional men and women as leaders and to that end have set up scholarships for high schools, college, and professional schools. They have a backlog of college graduates as Lagunas have attended the University of New Mexico for years as well as other agricultural, business, and technical schools.

As the committee worked along they felt the need of so many amendments to the constitution that they recommended a new constitution. Some Council members demurred, but were won over with pictures of a 1922 Ford alongside a modern model, and the committee was ordered to draft a new constitution which was submitted to the voters on October 8, 1958. More than 68 percent of the qualified voters went to the polls and the constitution was adopted by over 90 percent of the voters.

Important changes in the new constitution included the deletion of the word "male" in voter qualifications. All Lagunas over eighteen years of age may now vote and hold office regardless of sex or location. There are colonies of Lagunas in Albuquerque and Gallup, New Mexico; Winslow, Arizona; and Barstow and Richmond, California where polling places are set up as needed. The largest off-reservation colony in Albuquerque numbers 155; 25 percent of them own their own homes and all live well. Individuals scattered throughout many
states may vote through absentee ballots. The Laguna Pueblo Council has kept in touch with all these colonies, which resulted from that early contract with the railroad, by making them yearly visits. One councilman said: "We must water the seeds we planted long ago so they will bear flowers."

The new constitution included administrative and procedural changes. A monthly financial statement is now required and a yearly audit of the books. The treasurer is bonded and every check signed by him must be countersigned by the governor. Any expenditure of more than one hundred dollars must be approved by the Council. The Council has approved a recommendation of the Finance and Planning Committee for the hiring of an executive secretary or business manager to be salaried and bonded. Laguna promises to be as businesslike as any corporation.

The story of the Lagunas is most spectacular because they are rich, but all the New Mexico pueblos progress, though at varying rates of speed due largely to the reluctance of the elders to see their ancient standards, beliefs, and customs violated by new ways, and always to their underlying distrust of the white man who has—as we must admit—betrayed them so often. This is especially true in the matter of voting. Many Pueblo people hesitate to use their voting privilege, fearing this too will prove only another white man's weapon to be used against them. Some old men state this frankly; others show it only by a wary look in the eyes and by the fact that they do not register or vote. Naturally younger men are quicker to use the ballot, but even they hesitate. Friends of the Indians who are urging them to take advantage of this basic right of citizens find that the best way to reach them is on the local level and in regard to schools. Indians see the point to having friends on the county school boards; a few young men are actually running for the county school board. Only time will show what the results will be when politicians begin to go seriously after the Indian vote.

The Apaches, toughest Indian warriors and the last tribes to be defeated, have been placed on two reservations in Arizona and two in New Mexico. All of these include good timberlands, good grasslands, and some arable valleys. Apaches do well as stockmen, ride in rodeos with the best, and their cattle take prizes at state fairs. They also have good incomes from their timberland which they manage well. But Apaches have more modern ideas as well.
The Mescaleros in east-central New Mexico, who are the descendants of Geronimo’s fierce band, are cashing in on their reservation’s good position as a stopover for tourists between the Carlsbad Caverns and Santa Fe. They engaged the Stanford Research Institute to help them plan, and on their advice have set up a civic center to handle tourists as well as tribal affairs. Handsome buildings house administrative offices along with a motel, a restaurant, and a curio shop for the sale of traditional beadwork and leatherwork. These projects have not always been successfully handled as old Apache traditions sometimes run counter to sound business practices.

The Jicarilla Apaches in northcentral New Mexico are the luckiest Apaches, for gas has been found on their reservation and several pipelines bring them an excellent income which their governing council handles well.

Recently the Jicarilla Council sent a committee of four men to the University of New Mexico to ask advice about setting up scholarships. They had one million dollars to invest in what they proposed to call the Chester A. Farris Scholarships, in honor of the agent they still revere. Professors, duly impressed, gave sound advice; but the fact that made newspaper headlines was that each Apache, asked to spell out his name, offered his visiting card with his name, his office, his home and business address, and his telephone number.

The Navajo tribe, the largest and now the richest in the United States, has grown in less than a century from 15,000 to nearly 90,000 people living on a reservation about the size of West Virginia. Its largest area is in Arizona, but it includes small areas in Utah and Colorado and a larger one in New Mexico, thus giving the Navajos the Four Corners, the only spot in the United States where four states meet. Most of New Mexico’s 30,000 Navajos live outside the reservation in an area known variously as the Checkerboard Area, Grazing District No. 7, or the Eastern Navajo Country. This lies west of Albuquerque on both sides of Highway 66 and extends from the Río Puerco to the Arizona border and from the San Juan River on the north to the Zuñi reservation on the south. This area has its own problems because ownership forms a veritable checkerboard of allotments to individual Navajos, privately-owned land, railroad land, public domain, and federal lands controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Navajo Reservation, considered such a hopelessly arid land, began to spout oil about a generation ago, and the tribe’s wealth was
greatly augmented again in 1953 when a Navajo discovered uranium in the Checkerboard on Santa Fe Railway land. Since then vast uranium deposits have been found on the Reservation. And the end is not yet. Mining companies continue to explore the region, its outlet town of Farmington grows booming, and the Navajo Council meets regularly to consider what to do with its amazing wealth. Maurice McCabe, Executive Secretary of the Council has said: "We Navajos have always been thieves; we have always stolen whatever we wanted; so now we are taking ideas as fast as we can use them."

Some advanced ideas have been put into effect at Window Rock, a great red sandstone windowed butte which is the Navajo capital. There the Navajo Tribal Council meets, and the Chairman of the Council, presently Paul Jones, has his office. The Remington Rand Company was hired to set up the tribal offices with all needed equipment, and there trained Navajo stenographers, filing clerks and bookkeepers handle banks of filing cases and card catalogues. A record is kept of every Navajo who has needed any service in health, education, welfare, employment, recreation, or help in the management of marketing his herds, flocks, or handicrafts. An annual fair is held at Window Rock which brings together not only thousands of Navajos, but almost as many whites and Indians of other tribes who have business with this tribe which now owns and operates lumber mills and a coal mine. The tribe is encouraging industry to settle on the edge of Navajo country. The civic center includes a radio station and plans are made for a large auditorium where they propose a winter season of concerts, ballets, and theatrical productions. Paul Jones, Council Chairman, said: "We are going to invite Gallup people to our productions as they have no auditorium of their own." So the modern Indian is reaching out to share his advantages with his less favored white neighbors.

Programs of industrial development began before the great uranium development with sums borrowed from the federal government, but now the tribe is affluent enough to finance its own industries which include several trading posts, tribal motels, and several housing developments that have survived a period of experimentation. Generally more successful have been efforts to cooperate with industry in towns that can hire Navajo labor and in efforts to train and place Navajo workers.

A revealing instance of Navajo adaptability was reported by Mr. George Bullock, a Boy Scout executive who hoped to establish a Scout
training center somewhere on the Reservation and, in time, cover it with Scout clubs. Mr. Bullock outlined his plan to Chairman Jones.

"Let's go look at the Reservation," said Mr. Jones, and forthwith called an airplane from Farmington. Within an hour the two men were sailing over deserts with towering red upthrusts here and there, the fabulous Monument Valley with unequalled natural sculpture, remote canyons where prehistoric ruins were hidden, dark green forests of pointed pine. Mr. Bullock suggested that such forests might be used for training in forestry and land management; ruins would be fine for archaeological studies and for studies in ancient lore directed by medicine men. He pointed out other spots as likely for training in woodcraft; and neither man thought it funny that white men should be teaching Indians to live outdoors. As they talked, back in the office, Mr. Bullock said: "Now which kind of a center would be best, and how much money can the tribe appropriate?"

"Oh," said Chairman Jones, "I thought we might set up all the centers you propose. Would one million dollars be enough? That is, minus ninety thousand which we need to fence in Monument Valley as a recreation area."

Such people naturally have a broad and well-financed educational plan looking toward the final goal of producing Navajos fully adapted to modern life, including their own professionals to lead and direct the tribal business. The tribal budget for fiscal 1958 called for the expenditure of twelve million dollars of which five million was for education. The purpose is to keep every Navajo child in school, well fed, well clothed, and fully supplied with all he needs to help him absorb all the education he can. For those who can progress beyond grade school the tribe offers a series of high school, college, and professional scholarships. Navajo children average well in school; their only handicap—lack of English—is being overcome by the special language training being offered in the public schools.

Health, so closely tied in with education is being rapidly improved on the Reservation, where modern medicine is reducing the incidence of the great scourges of tuberculosis and trachoma. Part of this happy result is due to a clever move on the part of Dr. Estella Ford Warner, a U. S. Public Health officer lent to the Indian Bureau back in the thirties. When a new hospital was to be dedicated at Ft. Defiance, Dr. Warner invited all the medicine men to attend. What she said that day went far to offset centuries of lack of respect. She explained that the government was putting up this hospital where white doctors
would use their skills, but that the ancient skills of medicine men were needed too; she invited them to cooperate in healing. This was not all baseless palaver; the medicine men practice much sound therapy in the way of massage, bone setting, above all in arousing trust in the patient. Medicine men have also come to trust non-Indian physicians. Dr. John Cobb of the U. S. Public Health Service, consultant in maternal and child health for the Indian Service, says: "I doubt if there is a medicine man on the reservation who would not refer to the hospital any infectious disease he recognized, especially tuberculosis."

Another important factor in the improving of health conditions among the Navajos is a Navajo woman. Anna Wauneka, a daughter of the honored old chief Chee Dodge, is a Council member who heads the Health Committee and acts also on the U. S. Public Health Advisory Committee. When Anna Wauneka gets on the radio to spread useful information in both Navajo and English, she is heeded. Many Navajos have radios, if not in the hogan, then in the pick-up truck, or they can easily reach one in the nearest trading post or clinic. People who once distrusted white doctors and were terrified of hospitals as places where people died, are now quite willing to go to a clinic for examination or treatment, to a hospital for parturition or even surgery.

The Navajo’s readiness to go along with whatever seems good appeared when Salk anti-polio vaccine was suddenly available in sufficient quantities to protect most of the population. Doctors all over the United States found it difficult to get people to bring their children in for inoculation. But on the Navajo Reservation it was different. Anna Wauneka, as chairman of the Health Committee, got on the radio and in both English and Navajo explained that here was real protection against a hideous and crippling disease. She urged the people to take their children at once to the nearest center, a trading post or a clinic. The Navajos, even those who did not understand English, responded promptly and in such numbers that the doctors ran out of vaccine. They consider the outlook for continuing immunization very good indeed.

Naturally all does not go so well with the Navajos. The Checkerboard poses its own problems, because of its make-up. It is policed by county sheriffs, State Highway Patrolmen, and Navajo police, known as Law and Order Men. This has made evasion easy. A lawbreaker has only to slip across the line from one jurisdiction to another to escape arrest; bootleggers have flourished, and drunkenness remains a major problem in certain areas.
Crownpoint, about forty miles north of Thoreau on Highway 66, has for fifty years been the Indian Service administrative center for the Eastern Navajo Country. The Navajos are now using their tribal funds to develop Crownpoint as a civic center to provide certain amenities for the people that the Indian Service never gave them. They are building a hall for meetings, movies, and dances; a kitchen and sewing room with sewing machines; dormitories and showers, and a playground. The U. S. Public Health Service which operates a hospital at Crownpoint is urging the tribe to build housing for their many Navajo employees as the present housing is no more than they need for out-of-state doctors and nurses.

Crownpoint is a chapter center. The entire Reservation is divided into more than one hundred chapters where Navajos meet to discuss their local and tribal affairs. It is planned to reduce the number of chapters to coincide with the number of districts that send representatives—men or women—to the Tribal Council. Crownpoint may serve as a model for other chapter civic centers. It is presently important as a test for the Navajo’s great desire to acquire land in the Checkerboard Area to make it entirely Navajo. They meet the land owner’s tendency to ask high prices for their holdings and they resent what looks to them like the government’s giving preference to non-Indian purchasers even when the Navajo bid was the best and the tribe was certainly “the most interested party.” One such case has been protested by tribal attorneys.

These few examples culled from the experience of our New Mexico Indians certainly show them to be intelligent people, capable of understanding their own situation, of studying ways to improve it, and above all ready to take expert advice and to put sound programs into operation.

Naturally as Indians are human there are cases of backwardness, even of temporary failure when tribal leaders oppose change or individuals fail to profit fully by scholarships or business opportunities. But even a bank has recognized the financial value of New Mexico’s Indians to the state’s economy. The Albuquerque National Bank devoted its 1958 annual progress report to the Indian’s financial contribution to New Mexico’s wealth. This report shows that in 1957 Pueblo Indians and some off-reservation Navajos living in villages, realized $414,981 from livestock; $1,549,453 from crops. The Mescalero Apaches made about $400,000 from cattle sales; and the entire Navajo reservation was credited with sales of sheep and wool amounting to $1,778,396 and
cattle sales of $249,857 of which the bank credits New Mexico with one fourth.

In 1957 pueblo crops produced $1,549,453, about one fourth of it from Isleta; the Mescalero Apaches made about $40,000 from their farms; the reservation Navajos, $596,000. The Jicarillas made about $447,000 from livestock and crops combined.

Livestock and crops make up about one third of the total Indian income of the state; but Indians have other resources. Not only royalties and land leases, but in growing industry, especially on the Navajo Reservation. Altogether Indians are not only a picturesque tourist attraction and an anthropological laboratory; they are a definite financial asset to New Mexico.

But the Indian still has to cope with his ancient problem—the white man. Even now and even in the administration of the Indian Bureau two of the white man's besetting sins seem to be dominant. The United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, certainly believing that it is doing what is best for the Indian, seems to be going too fast and without thinking things through.

The current policy of the Indian Bureau is the “termination” of all federal services to Indians with the avowed purpose of making each Indian a fully acculturated citizen taking his part in modern life like any other citizen. This sounds good, but Indians generally do not look with favor upon a program of “termination.” They fear the Indian’s tribal life will be terminated, even liquidated; they know they are not ready for rapid changes. In some parts of the country they have seen Indian lands sold to white men without giving the tribe involved a chance to bid on their own lands. They see that their people who move into cities are often quite unable to adjust to the ways of industry and city living. Above all they fear that the sale of their lands to non-Indians will deprive them of a source of income they understand and of the tribal organizations which give them a strong influence on state and federal legislation affecting Indians. They are still doubtful that registering and voting will serve the same end.

But many thoughtful young people share the elders’ deepest fear that all these moves toward breaking down the Indian’s traditional safeguards will result in the destruction of his deepest values, even to his religious beliefs. Certainly this situation poses a problem not only for Indians, but for all Americans who believe in each man’s right to pursue happiness in his own way. If the Indian prefers to retain his
tribal organization, why should he not do so? The crux of the matter is the handling of the land problem. The Indian's fear that disposal of his lands without his full understanding and consent—and this has happened in more than one case—may result in destroying Indian life by removing its economic base. Latest rulings from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior indicate that this fear is no longer well founded. But the Indian has plenty of precedent for fearing that rulings from Washington, made without his full cooperation and consent, may deprive him of the safeguards which he needs and is entitled to in his efforts to adjust to new ways, even new values. As the Indian's situation is unique in our history and as he has a great cultural contribution to make to our life surely he is entitled to respectful consideration of his hope to retain as much of his old ways as he can where they do not run counter to his obligations as an American citizen. One thinks of the marvelous achievement of the Jewish people who have succeeded throughout the ages in adjusting fully to European life and customs, while retaining their own pride of culture, their own religious beliefs, even many intimate familial customs. Perhaps the American Indians, now that the most oppressive handicaps are being lifted, may similarly enrich American life. Maybe we ought "to give the land back to the Indians."