largest and one of the fastest growing in the country, the lack of full educational opportunities was an extremely serious matter. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that the Navajo people themselves strongly resisted education of their children for a great many years and to that extent they undoubtedly contributed to the formation of the problem. In more recent years, however, and especially since the close of World War II, the Navajo people have been practically unanimous in demanding educational opportunities for their children. Yet in June, 1953--- just two months before I took office---there were only about 14,000 Navajo children enrolled in school out of a school-age population of approximately 28,000. In other words, almost exactly half of the rising generation was being condemned to illiteracy and all the limitations and disabilities in adult life which that term inevitably implies.

When we turn to the economic situation of the Indian people in this "only yesterday" period, we find a rather complicated picture. The great majority of American Indians, of course, have been afflicted with poverty throughout most of our history and their living standards, with a few notable exceptions here and there, have nearly always compared unfavorably with those of their non-Indian neighbors. During the first half of the present century an increasing number of tribal groups and individual Indians began gradually moving out of this submerged status into something like economic parity with the rest of the population.

Yet, paradoxically, the problem of Indian poverty, in nation-wide terms, had in all probability grown more acute during this same period. In another context I have already touched on the major reasons why I believe this was so. On the one hand, we had the steady increase in tribal populations combined with a relatively fixed and generally inadequate land base. On the other, we had, as a result of the World War II experience, a growing Indian awareness of the alternatives to poverty and a mounting dissatisfaction with living standards which had at one time been perhaps more passively accepted. By the time when I took my first extensive field trip through the Indian country in the fall of 1953, it was abundantly clear---to me at least---that lack of full opportunity for economic advancement was one of the most basic and serious problems confronting our Indian people.

By the late 1940's the unique governmental status of Indians in our total national society had long since been established in broad outlines even though it was constantly undergoing some redefinition in minor details at the hands of our lawyers and jurists. While the Indians were still widely referred to as "wards of the Government", it was clear that this term was no longer truly appropriate or accurate. The two things that might once have justified the use of the phrase---Army control of Indian movements on and off the reservations and the issuance of Government rations---were by 1950 a part of our remote and picturesque American past rather than a current reality of Indian life. Indians were free to come and go the same as other American citizens even though many of them never strayed more than 40 or 50 miles from their reservation homes during the course of a lifetime. All of them were expected to earn a living like anyone else although, as I have already indicated, many of them were finding it difficult to do so.

This covers, at least in broad outline, the situation in Indian affairs as it had developed down through the decades and as it was just a few years ago. Since then certain