

1212 N. 32nd Ave/
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

April 8, 1954

Mr. Jimmie James,
Portland, Ore.

Dear Jimmie:

I've been a long time answering letter 2540, concerning the United Indian Nations of North America.

First, I wanted it to mellow, wanted a chance to study it more carefully and besides wanting you to receive other reactions, I've been busy early and late, as usual. I did drop you a card to let you know I had received it, and that I would be writing.

I presume by this time your friend Wilson Charley has been to Portland and dropped in to see you. I saw him a short while when he returned from Washington, but not since.

First your proposal seems to have one objection: That of uniting our friends so they can present a united front against the numerous ~~xxxxxxxx~~ dangers of adverse legislation that beset them.

Frankly, while I realize that you have only outlined a proposal and not attempted to set it down in black and white, it is too cumbersome.

Since it is a proposal to unite against a common enemy, adverse pressure upon our friends, it suggests but does not illustrate how this can come to pass as far as the finances are concerned.

I do not know whether there are restrictions upon the various reservations as to dispensation of tribal funds for matters of this kind. There would have to be a common meeting place, at least once in a while, and meetings, including travel, cost money. I do not see how that could be arranged.

Secondly, while it is none of my affair, I believe from the observations I have made here and in other states where I have resided, that the natural suspicion of the people, and it is natural that they should be suspicious, would be difficult to overcome. They wonder why anyone would want to do anything without receiving something. I have given up, long ago to try and show that was my reason, which it was.

For instance in my sculpture. Were I to go to Washington and make appointment to see any of several of the biggest men in the country, they would find time and permit me to sculpture them.

Were I to go any place in Alaska to any leaders, old people or others, and wish to sculpture them, they would grant me that request.

But how is it with our friends, with very, very few exceptions. They are suspicious, in spite of the explanations. They are not cooperative.

Of course I have always followed this procedure. If I go to a place like a library that is not a public library, the time I require of the librarian there to help me dig up information is his time and I am willing to pay for it.

If I go to someone to make a sculpture of them and he is not a leader or civic minded person, his time is worth money to him and I am willing to pay for it. But even then, I find many obstacles in my way.

So with this simple little example I see many drawbacks to your proposal, although assuredly something like that is needed.

And I also confess my ignorance. What about the Congress of American Indians? Isn't that an organization supposed to do much as you have proposed. Or, have they become hopelessly entangled in lobbying, class legislation, etc.

If that is true, then can't you go to any reservation and find thereon that the reservation's real problems and difficulties, and the real seat of the trouble is inability of the people themselves to get along with each other as brothers. Brothers must give and take. They can not have everything, their own selfish way. They must be big and ~~and~~ give and give gladly, for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Their failure to do that has resulted in various small groups rising up and dominating the reservation.

There is the same situation in larger fields. Smaller groups rise up and dominate entire cities or entire states, and at times, entire governments, until the great majority of the people, knowing what is right and just, rise up and vote them out of power.

That is why I say and have said: The vote is the greatest weapon. A vote is a sacred thing. It is the individual's right to express himself. If enough individuals express themselves, and we know that in the ultimate the greatest number are for good, then the greatest good for the greatest number can be accomplished. But, let only the selfish few with their selfish interests vote, and the rest, find themselves just where they are.

People are the makers of their own destiny.

I get off the subject of your proposal, but those are my impressions after I have thoroughly digested it.

I said that these people's affairs were not my business. That is wrong. When they are being wronged, that is my business. That is your business. That is the business of every fair minded American. But the people cannot make it their business unless they know about it. And they can't know about it unless they are told and learn. A few people and letters can't do it.

I had hopes that I could do a great good through publication of a book, and that may come to pass if selfish interests are omitted. But I am afraid now, that many things may be too late, before I can get this book published. It is a story that would sit everyone to thinking, would be read by those in authority to do things that are right and block some of this class legislation. I had it worked out

with the publishers where they would have started on it right away, and got it out within some four or five months, had I been able to ~~promise~~ promise or lay down orders for 150 to 200 copies in advance.

The book wasn't a small one and was well illustrated and perfectly neutral. But, because of the high cost of publishing, the publisher is moving slow, too slow, and I'm afraid that by the time he gets around to it, these laws and bills we fear will be laws.

Half of that number of advance copies, placed in the hands of legislators, senators, the President himself would have done great good, of that I am sure. I personally arranged to purchase about 100 copies for distribution for that purpose. On top of that, I know that the book would move, were it published. But, business is business with a publisher, and he has to have a little assurance, amounting to \$300 to \$500 when the publication is costing him in terms of \$10,000, otherwise he waits for more appropriate time.

So much for my own woes. I'd be interested in knowing ~~xxxx~~ the reaction you received. There may be a story in it for me and the story, itself, might help get things going.

I'd be interested in knowing if the proposal has actually been acted upon by any reservation or groups, and I'd be interested in knowing what I could do to help bring your wish to come true. Because I know that would be the wish of your friends, and I would not want to do anything they did not want done.

Keep me posted as you have the opportunity. Meanwhile, the best of regards to you.

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