

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

219 Dupont Circle Building,

Washington 6, D. C.

Phones: ADams 2-8566

Mrs. Peterson or

ADams 2-3390

Mr. George

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 5, 1960 -- The economy and community life of the 5000 members of the Salish and Kootenai Indian Tribes of the Flathead Reservation in western Montana will be seriously disrupted if Congress authorizes seizure by the Corps of Engineers of the Army of valuable tribal dam sites in order that a larger, more costly dam can be built just off the reservation by the Corps, said two official delegates of the Tribes in Washington today.

Proponents of the Knowles high dam public-power project have written a bill which they propose to attach as a rider to the Rivers and Harbors public-works bill expected to come up in the United States Senate about the middle of May. That bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Indians to negotiate for the taking of the Indian land, but the certain provision for condemnation proceedings provided in the bill would serve as a blackjack over the tribes, said Walter McDonald, former chairman of the tribes and member of the Montana Inter-Tribal organization.

The tribes are opposed to the building of any high dam, which would flood valuable tribal grazing lands. If the tribal damsites are developed it will probably be done privately at no cost to the government. A high dam just off the reservation has been estimated to cost more than a quarter of a billion dollars. The two tribal sites would produce more than

(more)

add 1 (Kootenai and Salish Tribes oppose Knowles Dam)

90% of the same kilowatts as the high dam proposed by the Corps of Engineers, at less than one-sixth the cost, the tribal delegates said.

Many additional problems will be avoided if Congress abandons the plan of the Corps of Engineers. Walter Morigeau, a tribal delegate who is a rancher on the reservation, said that a serious boom and bust crises will befall the tribes if Congress adopts the present course of action. This can be avoided if annual payments, including payments in power, are made to the tribes instead of one cash payment for all their tribal title, which would be quickly distributed and spent. The delegates declared that even if the high dam is built it is unnecessary to take more than an easement from the Indians instead of all their right, title and interest.

Although Knowles Dam itself would be built a short distance off the Flathead Indian Reservation, the water would back up sixty-five miles onto the tribally-owned grazing land on the reservation. Indian cattlemen have equal rights in the use of the tribally-owned grazing land and they would have to divvy up the remaining acres to make room for those squeezed out of the taking area.

SPECIAL TO WASHINGTON, OREGON,
ALASKA

FROM:
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
DuPont Circle Building
Washington, D. C.

November 18, 1960
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A resolution was adopted last night by the National Congress of American Indians meeting in convention in Denver, Colorado, strongly endorsing the position taken by the Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, who urge that Chemawa Indian School near Salem, Oregon, be reopened to the children of those regions.

The Chemawa School, which served the Indians of the Northwest and Alaska for more than seventy-five years, was converted into an exclusive Navajo institution in the Esienhower administration. The Indians of the area protest that they have need of the facility to serve homeless and neglected children, children from broken homes, and the children of destitute parents who are unable to provide support.

Delegates of Indian tribes in Oregon and Washington and Mr. George Miyasato, representing the Alaska Native Brotherhood, were among the 300 official delegates of 70 tribes who began their deliberations in Denver on Monday.

EDITOR: Please pick up attached page.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 1955

Hilda Henderson
ADams 2-3390
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The Executive Council of the National Congress of American Indians, meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, Hotel Utah, December 8 through 11 voted again to renew its efforts and that of the entire organization in defeating the appointment of Wesley A. D'Ewart as Assistant Secretary of the Interior. The appointment is an interim one and will require Senate confirmation in the next Session of Congress. They enlist public support--especially from church and conservation groups of the country--in defeating Senate confirmation of Mr. D'Ewart's appointment. In resolution passed by some fifty official tribal delegations in 12th Annual Convention of this only national all-Indian organization in Spokane, Washington last September, the Indians opposed the rumored appointment of Mr. D'Ewart for the reason they are of the opinion that the record of Mr. D'Ewart when he was a member of Congress was one which showed him to be unsympathetic toward the Indian people in their efforts to maintain their diminishing land base.

The executive session reported its denunciation of the present administration's piecemeal termination of Federal responsibility before that responsibility has been fully and honorably discharged. In analyzing the present problems of the Indians and their need for improved and expanded education, health and economic opportunities, they pointed out the shameful history of failure of the Trustee--the Federal Government--in carrying out its treaty obligations to American Indians.

They called upon the 84th Congress, Second Session, to rescind H. Con. Res. 108 passed by the 83rd Congress in 1953 which declares the policy of the United States Government to be one of terminating its responsibilities toward the Indian people as rapidly as possible. The Indians asked, instead, that Congress declare

a policy which calls for a constructive resources development program along the lines of the technical assistance and Point Four programs which this nation has found to be good business in under-developed countries abroad.

The NCAI's governing body appointed a committee of six of its members to study and intensify its efforts by NCAI to initiate tribal self-help, adult education and community development programs on Indian reservations and to seek means for bringing these about.

The most intense session of the four-day meeting came when an official delegation of Yakimas presented a carefully documented report of what they called "incredibly callous, dictatorial" action by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in "interfering" in the Yakima election which was held on December 6th, the validity of which the Commissioner has questioned. The question of validity arose when the Yakima General Council voted to postpone the election two days because of the death of the tribe's / ^{Credit Committee Chairman} and one of its most esteemed members. The NCAI Executive Council, by a rising unanimous vote, pledged the full resources of its organization to support the Yakima tribe in seeking public understanding and backing for validation of their December 6th election by the Department of the Interior.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C.

PETERSON
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MARCH 29, 1956
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C., March 29; President Eisenhower was called upon today to state whether his administration approves the recent efforts of the Assistant Attorney General, Perry Morton, to obtain Congressional amendments which would almost destroy the Indian Claims Commission Act.

In a letter to President Eisenhower, Joseph R. Garry, President of the National Congress of American Indians, said the organization "would appreciate your advising us whether the recent action of the Assistant Attorney General before three committees of Congress in an effort to obtain amendments which would almost completely destroy the Indian Claims Commission Act has the approval of your administration." The National Congress of American Indians, with a national office in the Dupont Circle Building, is the only national organization of Indian tribes and Indian individuals.

The Indian Claims Commission Act was passed in 1946 to give the Indian tribes their day in court on their many claims against the United States. Prior to that act, the Indians could not sue the United States without a special act of Congress and many claims of the Indians, some more than 100 years old, had not been heard. In passing the act, Congress stated that in order to solve the so-called Indian problem it was necessary that all Indian claims be heard and settled "once and for all".

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Last year the Court of Claims sustained an award to the Otoe and Missouri Tribe of Oklahoma for land previously occupied and possessed by them as their homeland but ceded by the Indians to the United States in 1833 without fair compensation. The Department of Justice had unsuccessfully contended that so-called "original Indian title"--mere title by reason of possession and not recognized by a treaty or act of Congress--was not sufficient basis for a law-suit. When the Supreme Court refused to review this^{decision}/by the Court of Claims, the Department of Justice is reported to have taken its argument to Congress.

"We do not believe that the administration's policy could be to deny the Indians their day in Court provided by Congress almost 10 years ago when it enacted the Indian Claims Commission Act, but the Assistant Attorney General's action is open to that interpretation," the National Congress of American Indians told the President.

"Indian tribes throughout the United States and Alaska have been investing their funds for many years, but especially in the last ten years, to prosecute Indian title claims. Many poor tribes have appropriated the last dollars in their treasuries in order to keep these claims in progress. Some of our old people pass on each year--they and all the rest of us believing the Nation was sincere in giving us our day in Court..... We beg you to let us know where your Administration stands and we ask you to advise us whether the action of the Assistant Attorney General is approved by your Administration or whether it represents only his personal conviction", the National Indian Congress concluded.

Sontheimer, Runkle & Associates, Inc.
867 National Press Building, Wash., DC
DI 7-4668 or AD 2-3390

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 1959

For: NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

OFFICIAL AMERICAN INDIAN LEADERS WIND UP WEEK-LONG SESSION;
DENOUNCE WHITE HOUSE PICKETING BY UNREPRESENTATIVE TRIBE

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 23, 1959 . . The elected leaders of the National Congress of American Indians, winding up a week-long meeting here, took time off from their deliberations to denounce the picketing of the White House by an unrepresentative group of Iroquois Indians from upper New York State. Led by their self-styled "spokesman," retired Brigadier General Herbert C. Holdridge, this Iroquois band also attempted a "citizens' arrest" of Indian Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons at the Interior Department last Friday, then tried to present a petition to the British Embassy here to intervene in their behalf.

Joseph R. Garry, President of the National Congress of American Indians, said: "These manifestations are irresponsible and disgraceful, they are out of Indian character, and they do not represent Indian sentiment as a whole. Most Indians are offended, moreover, when our ceremonial regalia, which we associate with solemn occasions, is used in a cheap publicity stunt." Garry further added that he thought that General Holdridge was doing a great disservice to Indians by promoting petitions to foreign governments, in place of making responsible presentation of their grievances before proper Congressional and Interior Department authorities, and the courts.

MORE

"Responsible Indian leaders have frequent opportunity to discuss their problems and aspirations with Congressmen, most of whom are sympathetic and receptive to our people when they understand the issues," said Garry, "and while we have our differences with Commissioner Emmons and the Indian Bureau, we deplore the high-handed, menacing tactics taken by General Holdridge and the Iroquois group. Garry made it clear that the National Congress of American Indians, which officially represents the majority of Indian tribes, had refused to associate itself in any way with the Holdridge group's Washington foray, and added that official Indian leaders from every part of the country were shocked that so much credence would be given by the public to the demonstrations in Washington that were "phoney" in so many ways.

While the Iroquois were picketing the White House in war bonnets, Garry and 75 Indian officials from 35 tribes were meeting in executive council at the Sheraton-Park Hotel, in sober discussion of a wide range of Indian matters varying from Congressional policy to Colorado River water rights. They voted to support a new Congressional resolution (SCR 12) introduced by Senator James Murray of Montana, redefining U.S federal policy toward Indians. This resolution provides that no termination of federal trusteeship or services to Indians shall take place unless the tribes affected have full understanding of the proposed termination and until Indians are on a parity in health and education with other Americans.

The Indians' executive council also urged amendment of the Social Security Act to eliminate discrimination against Indians in public welfare programs, and recommended changes in eligibility requirements for federal health and education services to Indians.

They also reaffirmed their support of the Area Redevelopment Bill (sometimes called the "depressed areas" bill), now pending in Congress.

Garry noted that the Indians had never before been so united and vigorous in pressing their legitimate aspirations through proper channels. "This makes us all the more concerned when some of our people are led to participate in cheap publicity stunts which tend to make other Americans believe that Indians are irresponsible or even unpatriotic," he said.

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Sontheimer, Runkle & Associates, Inc.
867 National Press Bldg.
Washington, D. C.

For Immediate Release

For: NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
Dupont Circle Bldg.
Washington, D. C.

AMERICAN INDIAN LEADERS HAIL NEW BOOK;

SEEN AS RAISING MAJOR POLICY DEBATE IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D. C., May, 1959 ... American Indian leaders, U.S. Senators, and authorities on Indian affairs are commenting widely on a new book which is expected to generate sharp discussion in and out of Congress on the entire issue of Federal relations with the Indian tribes. Entitled INDIANS AND OTHER AMERICANS (Harper & Brothers), the book was jointly written by Harold E. Fey, editor of the CHRISTIAN CENTURY, and D'Arcy McNickle, of the Flathead tribe of Montana, who for 16 years was on the staff of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and now heads American Indian Development, Inc.

In a major article in the SATURDAY REVIEW of May 9, Senator Richard L. Neuberger describes the book as "moving and eloquent".

"When we lecture to other nations about 'self determination of peoples'", writes Sen. Neuberger, "we conveniently forget that the only such determination that we allowed the American Indian was usually the business end of a cavalry troop's carbines." He also observes, "American Indians weigh heavily on the collective conscience of us all. This was their land. They roamed it free as air. We took it away from them - by fair means or foul."

While Senator Neuberger does not agree with the authors on all counts, Indian leaders themselves proclaim the book as a major contribution in setting forth the Indians' position and aspirations.

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Joseph Garry, President of the National Congress of American Indians (which represents 63 of the most important tribes) considers it the most important book on Indian affairs to appear for many years. He states: "To the millions of well-meaning Americans who still tend to think of the Indians in terms of stereotypes, the cold, hard facts in this book may come as something of a shock. But it will be a healthy shock if they are able to appraise -- many for the first time -- the real situation and aspirations of America's most neglected and most misunderstood minority".

The book takes the wraps off the drama which has been unfolding in Washington since 1952, when the U.S. government announced a policy of withdrawing Federal responsibility and support from Indian tribes, a policy to eventually cut them adrift under circumstances which Indians believe would mean their virtual destruction. The reasons for the intense Indian opposition to this policy, at which Congress is now taking a second look, are made clearly in the book.

Noted author Oliver LaFarge, who is also President of the Association on American Indian Affairs, describes the book as "the best and most readable popular account of the history of our relations with the Indians, our administration of their affairs, and their present situation that has been written up to now." He is seconded by John Collier, former U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who says, "The book's theme is vital to every American; and the problem it presents and the solutions it advocates are immediate, politically present."

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SFR/jp

5/6/59

FROM: NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
DuPont Circle Building, Washington, D. C.

Convention Headquarters: Cosmopolitan
Hotel, Denver, Colorado

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDITOR: Please see top page for first paragraphs

Convention highlights have been:

(1) A telegram from President-elect John F. Kennedy reaffirming his campaign pledge of a program for the development of the human and natural resources of Indian reservations as an integral part of the total program of his administration and thus rejecting Eisenhower's termination policy;

(2) Announcement to the delegates by Dr. Sol Tax of the University of Chicago of the University's intention to begin immediately a comprehensive study of the American Indian today in partnership with Indian tribes and representatives of governmental and private agencies. The study is to be completed by June and it is hoped that such a study will provide a factual and objective basis for any policies and actions adopted by the new administration;

(3) Addresses by Congressman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado and Dr. Karl Menninger, Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas;

(4) Special sessions with representatives of 25 colleges and universities, including Norman McKown, Oregon State College, Corvallis and Theodore Stern of the University of Oregon.

Out of these joint and concurrent sessions developed a program for continuing liaison among the National Congress of American Indians, individual tribes, and colleges and universities.

(5) Election of officers for the coming year and adoption of thirty resolutions, including one which sets forth the qualifications deemed necessary by NCAI member tribes for candidates for the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

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The National Congress of American Indians is the only all-Indian organization in the United States. Its policies and procedures are determined by vote of official delegates of member tribes. Established in 1944, its membership has steadily increased and it is rapidly gaining recognition as the leading spokesman for a majority of the Indian people.

NOVEMBER 18, 1960

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W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

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Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

By rising unanimous vote following telegram was directed sent to Honorable Secretary of Interior with copy to you:

"The Honorable Douglas McKay
Secretary of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

December 13, 1955

National Congress of American Indians Executive Council in official meeting Salt Lake City December 8 through 10 is shocked to hear reports from Yakima Nation with regard to arbitrary and tyrannical action of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in respect to Yakima Election Dec. 6th. We are sickened at callous lack of respect for circumstances of death that enter into matter under consideration. NCAI deplors and condemns threats and interference in self-government in any form as evidenced in threat of Secretarial election. It is our understanding that a disinterested committee reported the Dec. 6th election was orderly and democratic and that wishes of majority (233-18) clearly were followed. This case following reports of bitter resentment of Seminoles and Creeks over alleged political interference in Selection of their chiefs can mean nothing else to us but total lack of administration respect for basic principles of self-government. Commissioner's action is incredibly dictatorial and we have upon request from Yakima General Council pledged all possible support to them in efforts to get public support for their position. In name of decency and democracy we appeal to you take firm hand in correcting attitude and trend expressed in the Yakima case and to honor the Dec. 6 Yakima election.

JOSEPH R. GARRY, PRESIDENT
NCAI EXECUTIVE COUNCIL"

For further information on the above matter, contact Paul M. Niebell, 1201 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. (District 7-6333).

National Congress of
American Indians
226 Dupont Circle Building
Washington 6, D.C.
(ADams 2-3390, ADams 2-8566)

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