



The Voice of the American Indian

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PROGRESS REPORT No. 2 - Feb. 22, 1961

DEC. 29 — GREAT FALLS, MONTANA. Steering committee appointed Dec. 10 (see Progress Report No. 1) at the Intertribal Policy Board Meeting holds first meeting to discuss procedure and sources of information for Montana's Indian Research Project. Plans meeting for Feb. 10.

JAN. 25 — WASHINGTON, D.C. The following memorandum brought to meeting in Chicago, Feb. 9-14 (see below) by Mr. Austin Buckles.

Washington, D.C.
January 25, 1961

MEMORANDUM TO Honorable Stewart L. Udall
Secretary of the Interior

OVERHAUL OF ORGANIZATION, PROCEDURES, AND REGULATIONS OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

On this change of administration it would seem appropriate that consideration be given toward streamlining the operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

It is the feeling of the delegations from the various tribes that to accomplish more adequately the aims of the present administration and the needs of the American Indians that there must be a reorganization study of the operation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This delegation, as a result of the combined experience of its members, would suggest that the following principles be given serious consideration:

KEY IDEAS

Give Superintendent
more authority

Untie Agency hands
to do the job that
needs doing for
Indians

Better review
progress

MEMORANDUM POINTS

1. More authority must be placed at the field agency level. Every tribe, though having problems similar to other tribes, has particular problems that need administrative application at that level.
2. This being the place for the decision it should be the place for competent personnel. There should be every effort made to retain at this level the personnel that can get the job done. It seems such a waste to have burdened with pure administrative problems men who have the drive, experience and desire to attack the problems that cry for solution.
3. There is a need for more effective process of administrative review of decisions made at this level. There must be a uniform policy to guide the field. By this we do not mean that every decision should be made at the Central Office. To accomplish this it is suggested that where there is a dissatisfied party that there be this review process so that uniformity can be established without the delay caused by review of every decision.

Limit the steps to approval of programs

Out-of-date regulations

Solicitor's office should be speeded up

More recognizing of the elected tribal officials as the voice of the people

4. There must not be so many steps to final decision. Along these lines we must suggest that if an Area Office is not the final authority on certain matters, then the advisability of maintaining such offices is questioned. The closest to the people involved that decision-making authority can be maintained the better we feel that the operation of the Bureau will be.
5. There should be a complete, immediate review of the Code of Federal Regulations and Bureau of Indian Affairs Manual of Procedures. There are regulations and procedures that are out of date and cumbersome.
6. There is an apparent need to facilitate the processing of matters through the Solicitor.
7. There must be more reliance on elected tribal officials as the voice of the Indian people in that area.

Many other suggestions for improvement of service could be made. We are asking that you consider the streamlining suggested and that you accept toward this end, if you will, recommendations we may submit after a series of tribal and intertribal meetings.

This memorandum was considered and approved at a meeting held in Washington, D. C. on January 24, 1961 by members of delegations from the following tribes: Yakima, Sisseton Sioux, Standing Rock Sioux, Colville Federated, Cheyenne and Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, Crow, Chippewa, Choctaw and Blackfeet.

Signed (s) Walter S. Wetzel, Elected Spokesman

JAN. 30 — ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN. Assistant Coordinator reports that in accordance with offers of co-operation given by representatives of various private, scholarly, governmental, and religious organizations interested in Indian affairs, over 8,000 packets in bulk quantities sent out. (See Progress Report No. 1, meeting in Washington, D.C., Dec. 15, 1960.) Cover letters prepared by the various groups called upon their members to render organizational assistance or special information as the Indians may request. Other bulk mailings sent out to Indians as requested on postcards.

FEB. 7 — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. Letter from Sol Tax.

February 7, 1961

To: Ben Bearskin, Neffie Berryhill, Nathan Bird, William Careful, Earl Cordier, Irene Dixon, Frank Fastwolf, David Fox, Harry Funmaker, Kenneth Funmaker, Lenore George, Mary Greendeer, Tom Greenwood, Helen Harden, Dorothy Holstein, Hiawatha Hood, Robinson Johnson, Columbus Keahna, William La Mere, Cloe La Pearl, Ed La Plante, Mario Martinez, Verne Miller, Daniel Mousseaux, Ernest Naquayouma, Edward Poitra, Richard Poweshiek, Tom Segundo, Rose Stevens, Deanna Stops, Ray Tahahwah, Annette Teboe, Carol Trebian, Mary Treetop, Melvin Walker, Vincent Zurega:

You are invited to supper next Saturday evening, February 11th at 6:00 p.m. at ISHAM MEMORIAL Y.M.C.A., 1515 North Ogden Ave., Chicago. You will be joined at supper by a number of Indians who have come from all over the U.S.A. to make preliminary plans for the American Indian Charter Convention which will be held here in Chicago, June 13-20.

After supper all of you who accept this invitation will be a temporary "Ways and Means Committee" to plan an "All Chicago" meeting which will be held on Saturday evening, February 25, also at ISHAM MEMORIAL Y.M.C.A.

Let me start again from the beginning. This Charter Convention will be held at the University of Chicago in June. All Indians in the U.S.A. are invited to come; and they are already discussing different programs for the future of American Indians.

Since the Convention will be in Chicago, the Indians living in Chicago are "hosts". Therefore, I invited to my home last Friday night Ben Bearskin, Frank Fastwolf, Tom Greenwood, Dorothy Holstein, Robinson Johnson, Willard LaMere, Thomas Segundo, and Melvin Walker. Mrs. Holstein and Tom Segundo could not come. The others, after several hours of discussion decided (1) there might be several thousand

Indians coming to Chicago for the Convention, and much planning needs to be done; (2) therefore, there should be an early meeting of all Chicago Indians who can be reached in time—and this meeting is scheduled for Feb. 25; (3) a temporary Ways and Means Committee should get together as soon as possible to discuss the problems, and prepare for the meeting—and this meeting is scheduled for Feb. 11th, (4) to give me names of Indians to be invited to this Feb. 11 meeting.

All of the names at the head of this letter were supplied by those who met with me last Friday evening. I am only the 'co-ordinator'." (Note: Melvin Walker was elected temporary chairman of the Chicago Ways and Means Committee at the February 11 meeting.)

FEB. 9 — GREAT FALLS, MONTANA. Sister Providencia reports Feb. 10 in letter to Sol Tax on Montana's Indian Research Project meeting:

February 10, 1961

"... it was the most successful to date. We had 26 persons present, including two professors from Montana State College at Bozeman — one Professor Dusenberry — and the Chairmen from the Flathead, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy Tribes and appointees from the Chairmen of the Crow and Blackfeet. There were six Council members, in addition, and the famous Iliff McKay of the Blackfeet. The Federal Government was represented by Mr. James D. Crawford, Administrative Officer from the Billings Area Office. The State was officially represented by Mr. Robert Colvill of the Child Welfare Supervisory Staff. Rev. Raymond Nyquist was the Rocky Boy Catholic missionary present and Mrs. Homer A. Morton was an Indian missionary of the Church of God.

The Women's Section has another co-chairman in Mrs. Joe Matte, Councilwoman of the Flatheads, and the ladies had a very fine meeting of their own to set up a survey. The professional people met separately to develop an Evaluation Committee which will do some preliminary evaluation of our "Indian Inventory" before it goes to you. The Bureau is well-advanced with the population data.

We had a panel on the proposed Charter by Dr. Lesa Lekis of the State Department's Fulbright Program in Brazil. She has done that great work on the dances of the West Indies. She explained the Point Four operation in South American tribal areas to the group and pointed out similarities in the Charter. The enclosed were panel notes for Max Gubatayao, Tlingit, and Richard Charles,* in their reactions to the data which you have compiled so magnificently. Your materials were certainly stimulating and the Tribes have taken much food for thought home with them. They do not want a Commission reorganization, as of the moment. They will meet in the State Capitol next week to benefit from Austin's report" (Austin Buckles, see next item: Chicago, Feb. 10-14.)

More soon,

Sister Providencia, F.C.S.P.

*A Panel On The Proposed Indian Charter as reported by Max Gubatayo and Richard Charles indicates the need to clarify the wording of any charter. They note ten statements in the model charter which can be understood as meaning different things to different people reading them.

FEB. 10-14 — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS — "Indian Advisory Committee meets at International House, University of Chicago campus. Sol Tax, Co-ordinator, AICC, invited Indian people representative of the major geographic regions of the United States and representative of a wide variety of Indian groupings including tribes organized under the Indian Reorganization Act, unorganized tribes, tribes or groups not under federal jurisdiction, urban Indians and various intertribal organizations to consider results of AICC discussions to date and advise him in his coordinative function in planning for the June 13-20 gathering. The meeting began at 3:00 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10 and continued for 12 sessions through February 14. After the first session, a tape recorder was procured and the discussions were recorded in full. The notes in this Progress Report are a synopsis of the Assistant Coordinator's written notes as the tapes are not yet fully typed. Each participant, identified below in alphabetical order, presented information of special concern to the group with which he was most closely associated as matters of interest and record in indicating the scope and form of Indian problems and achievements throughout the country." BENJAMIN BEARSKIN, **Winnebago-Sioux**, Chicago (Chicago Indian Center) presided at the first day's sessions and welcomed the group in behalf of the Chicago Indians who entertained the group at a dinner

at the Isham YMCA and a reception at the Indian Center Feb. 11. Mr. Bearskin spoke of the particular problems and needs in regard to employment and social adjustment of Indians living in urban areas. AUSTIN BUCKLES, **Sioux**, Montana (Fort Peck Sioux and Assinboine tribes), who was chosen as chairman of the second day's sessions, was called upon by the group to tell about the work of the Montana tribes in their already extensive efforts of gathering information and holding discussions in reference to AICC. (See Jan. 25—Washington, D.C.)

DIBBON COOK, **Klamath**, Oregon (Klamath Tribe) explained arrangements made by the Klamath in regard to termination. Mr. Cook belongs to the group which voted to remain a tribal entity under trust status with the U. S. National Bank rather than withdraw from the tribe.

GEORGE D. HERON, **Seneca**, New York (Seneca Nation of Indians) recounted the exhaustive but ultimately unsuccessful efforts of the Seneca to oppose the N. Y. State Power Commission in plans to build a dam which will flood a section of the reservation. Mr. Heron expressed the hope that the strength of combined Indian opinion would prevent the Seneca experience being repeated in other tribes in the future.

FRED KABOTIE, **Hopi**, Arizona (educator, Hopi Reservation) spoke of the dissatisfaction felt by many Hopi regarding methods employed by the government in deciding to close the Hopi high school. Mr. Kabotie also spoke of the difficulties encountered in recent years in obtaining adequate financing of tribal projects of demonstrated merit, citing the case of the Hopi Silver Workers Guild.

GEORGE KENOTE, **Menominee**, Wisconsin (Menominee Tribal Office) discussed the difficulties encountered by the Menominee in arriving at a satisfactory termination bill and plans for the future under termination. Mr. Kenote stressed the need for adequate factual surveys as a basis of large undertakings. JUDGE LACY MAYNOR, **Lumbee**, North Carolina described the situation of the Lumbee as Indians who never have been under federal jurisdiction but have retained a sense of Indian identity and distinctive community since colonial times. Judge Maynor recounted the problems of education faced by Indians lacking federal recognition in the racially complicated picture of the southern states.

HOWARD MCKINLEY, **Navajo**, Arizona (Navajo Tribe) stated that the Navajo have in the past encountered many hardships and while they still have problems of education and planning in their own interests, they can look to the future with greater optimism than heretofore because of the discovery and development in recent years of mineral resources on their land.

D'ARCY McNICKLE, **Flathead**, Colorado (American Indian Development, Inc.), who was elected chairman for the sessions after Feb. 11, spoke about the ideas underlying the "model charter" which he helped in large part to prepare. Mr. McNickle stressed its tentative nature as a beginning for discussion, the need for additional information, and the need for revision or even entire re-writing.

HELEN PETERSON, **Oglala Sioux**, Washington, D.C. (Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians) recounted the general history of Indian administration, the awakening of public awareness at various times resulting in periods of reform, and the need for a new assessment of Indian conditions and changes in current policy.

EARL BOYD PIERCE, **Cherokee**, Oklahoma (attorney to the Cherokee tribe) brought the good wishes for success of this meeting of the Oklahoma Cherokee and other members of the Five Civilized Tribes.

JOHN RAINER, **Taos**, New Mexico (Tas Pueblo) observed how at Taos there was great optimism during the Collier period in contrast to a sense of uncertainty over the last ten years. Later during the sessions, Mr. Rainer observed the value of the visit with the Chicago Indians at the Indian Center at this time in providing greater understanding of the need for all Indians to consider the critical nature of problems encountered by Indians relocated in large industrialized cities.

WILLIAM RICKARD, **Tuscarora**, New York (The Longhouse and The American Indian Defense League) recalled the experiences of the Tuscarora with the N.Y. State Power Commission in a dam site case closely paralleling that of the Seneca. Mr. Rickard also noted past disagreements in philosophy of different intertribal organizations, and expressed the hope that in AICC they might begin to understand one another and work together for the common good.

FRANK TAKES GUN, **Crow**, New Mexico (Native American Church) described legislation which has worked to the detriment of Indians and stressed the right of Indians to be properly informed on proposed legislation before it is too late for them to take proper action in those cases where their best interests are threatened.

ALVIN WARREN, **Chippewa**, New Mexico (Education Division, United Pueblo Agencies) expressed interest in working on concrete recommendations for the statement of Indian purpose. Mr. Warren was unfortunately taken ill and was unable to attend most of the sessions.

CLARENCE WESLEY, **San Carlos Apache**, Arizona (Chairman, San Carlos Tribal Council and President, National Congress of American Indians) noted the growing awareness of the Arizona Indians in the power of the ballot and the great efforts being made in voter education among Indians in his state.

In addition to the above participants, also invited but unable to attend the meeting were John Artichoker, **Sioux**, South Dakota (State Department of Education); The Rev. Vine Deloria, **Sioux**, South Dakota (Archdeacon, Episcopal Church); Ned Hatathli, **Navajo**, Arizona (Navajo Tribe); Virginia Klinecole, **Mescalero Apache**, New Mexico; Robert Thomas, **Cherokee**, Detroit (Anthropologist, Monteith College, Wayne State University); and Representative Alfred Widmark, **Tlingit**, Alaska (Alaska State Legislature and Alaska Native Brotherhood). Mr. Widmark sent a telegram the second day of the meeting: "Greetings to members of Indian Charter Conference and best wishes for a successful meeting . . . Regret unable to attend due to legislation in session."

A number of observers were present at the meeting: Sol Tax, Coordinator, AICC; Robert Rietz, Director of Chicago Indian Center; William Zimmerman, Jr., representing Department of Interior; Father Peter J. Powell, Director of Indian work, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago; Dr. Harold Fey, Editor, **Christian Century**; many Indians visiting or resident in Chicago; and Nancy O. Lurie, Assistant Coordinator, AICC. Occasionally, in the course of the meeting, observers were called upon to supply special information as needed by the group.

The participants decided to define their function at this meeting as those of an "Interim Study Group" and direct their attention to two major topics: First, consideration of the model charter in terms of revisions already suggested by Indians in various parts of the country; and, Second, organization and procedure for regional discussions and the meeting in June.

In regard to first topic, the entire model charter, including historical background was read aloud and discussed section by section. It was noted that in some areas confusion has arisen over the wording and that it is necessary to make clear that the intent of the model charter is to streamline the operations of the Indian Bureau, not abolish it. As a result of discussion the original recommendations concerning the Office of Indian Commissioner were changed and tentative suggestions were made regarding the necessity of redefining the functions of the Area Offices. In a press statement prepared by the group at the end of the meeting it was recommended that:

"(1) the recent termination policy be scrapped by Congress and replaced by 'a statement of renewed dedication to the principles of mutual understanding and agreement between the U.S. and the Indian tribes; 'a statement . . . that treaties and agreements be respected; and further, that Public Law 280 (1953) which permitted states to control law and order on Indian reservations without Indian consent be modified to require such consent;

"(2) a committee of Indians be established to advise the Secretary of the Interior and to provide continuity in policy and program operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs."

In reference to the second major topic discussed by the group the following motion was passed:

"That there shall be a convention of Indians at the University of Chicago, June 13-20, 1961 that shall be open to all Indians and groups of Indians in the United States and that a steering committee with subcommittees be established and assigned duties:

- A. Study and revision of policies and objectives including supportive documents for submission to the June convention.
- B. Arrangements for the convention (defined in discussion as program planning in contrast to C. below.)
- C. Ways and means for handling people (It was decided that the Chicago Indians Ways and Means Committee be appointed as the general committee on ways and means) in Chicago during the convention.
- D. Public Relations and dissemination of information.
- E. Rules.

Members were accordingly appointed to the steering committee as follows: D'Arcy McNickle (temporary

chairman); Benjamin Bearskin; the Rev. John J. Brown, S.J., **Blackfeet**, Montana; Austin Buckles; Dib-bon Cook; the Rev. Vine Deloria; George D. Heron; Fred Kabotie; George Kenote; Judge Lacy Maynor; Howard McKinley; Helen Peterson; Mrs. Marie Potts, **Pitt River**, California; John C. Rainer; Anthony Rivers, Jr., **Cheyenne River Sioux**, South Dakota; Mrs. Georgeann Robinson, **Osage**, Oklahoma; Frank Takes Gun; Clarence Wesley; and Alfred Widmark. Because of different interpretations and confusion about the phrase Charter Convention—Charter reminds some tribes of unpopular Indian Bureau policies and Convention sounds like a permanent Indian organization—the group voted to name the endeavor **American Indian Chicago Conference** with the sub-title "The Voice of the American Indian," as noted in the new letterhead on this Progress Report."

It was decided that work on AICC preparatory to the June meeting be carried out along regional lines and that results of local discussions be brought together at nine regional meetings early in April. As soon as possible after these meetings, the steering committee will gather for a meeting in Chicago and draft a second version of a general statement, called "charter" in the first draft. This second, but not final draft will incorporate ideas developed at the regional level and will be distributed to Indians early in May for further study and revision as a basis of discussions at the June Conference when the final statement will be developed. The nine regions are: Northwest, including Alaska; California-Nevada; Southwest; Oklahoma; Northern Plains; Southern Plains; Lake States; East; and Southeast. Within each region there will be five subcommittees: 1. Regional organization; 2. Study and Revision of Policies (A. in foregoing motion); 3. Arrangements (B in foregoing motion); 4. Public Relations (D. in foregoing motion); and 5. Rules (E. in foregoing motion). Chairmen were provisionally appointed to each of these committees and their names and addresses will be published in a following Progress Report pending their acceptance.

Sol Tax was called upon as co-ordinator to aid in the task of requesting the help of universities and other scholarly institutions in the regions to provide meeting places and resource people for the regional meetings.

The group reported that questions and different interpretations had arisen concerning the Model Charter (prepared by the National Congress of American Indians) and the supplementary documents which were mailed to Indians. The following clarifications were prepared for inclusion in this Progress Report:

"A. The Model Charter **did not and does not intend to suggest** (1) Creating a new Indian organization, (2) abolishing the Indian Bureau, (3) that treaties be changed, (4) replacing the Indian Reorganization Act.

"B. Neither the Meriam recommendations nor the Hoover Commission Report recommendations were adopted or endorsed word for word as N.C.A.I. recommendations. The N.C.A.I. quoted certain parts and endorsed the emphasis on education and economic development as being essential parts of organizing Bureau of Indian Affairs services for greater effectiveness in meeting the needs of the Indian people."

FEB. 16 — WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sol Tax reports meeting with the Secretary of the Interior, the Undersecretary and the members of Secretary Udall's task force which was appointed to study Indian conditions. Professor Tax called upon to explain AICC, its history and development to date. The response of Secretary Udall and his associates both cordial and encouraging with assurances that the Secretary is eager to have Indian opinion and full factual information before embarking on definitive policies of Indian administration. He and his associates look to AICC as a most fortunate development at this time as a means of providing the sort of information they consider fundamental to Indian administration.

If you have any news items for the Progress Report, send them to:

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