

From:  
Oroville, Washington  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
Oroville, Washington

RELEASE ON RECEIPT

NESPELEM, Oct. 25--A small white woman was on the war path in Washington's biggest county today.

Mrs. Ruth Scofield of Oroville was a pro-Indian orator, wife of an Oroville fruit packing house superintendent. Audience was a committee of United States senators. Mrs. Scofield spoke in behalf of Indians of the historic Colville Indian reservation--an era and an area facing certain change.

An orderly but immediate ending of the reservation, cessation of government Indian Bureau official secrecy, and congressional action to make tribesmen self-sufficient with financial flying speed were among her requests.

Idaho Senator Frank Church and his Senate subcommittee on Indian Affairs were in Spokane yesterday, at Nespelem today, and will be in Seattle tomorrow (Oct. 26) for hearings on two bills concerning ending the nation's reservation system for Indians.

In her oral and written testimony Mrs. Scofield singled at the stake both Democrat Senator Henry Jackson and Republican Congressman Walter Horan. (Senator Jackson heads the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs committee of which Senator Church's subcommittee is a segment.)

She emphasized her remarks were the product of two years research and reading fine print into tribal problems.

The barrier to full financial citizenship for Colville tribesmen, she said, is the Bureau of Indian Affairs itself.

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Congress, she told senators, must let Indians sell their lands if they wish.

"The Indian Bureau's reluctance to let them sell is understandable," she said. "The Indians understand, too. They say to stay in business and have jobs for themselves the Indian bureau has to have Indians."

Relief for the reservation now, she said, stems from a case of fewer and fewer Indians in today's space age, almost no chiefs left for them, and far too many government Indian Bureau employees who want the reservation continued as a livelihood for themselves.

"In 1933," she said, "The Indian bureau had 5,000 employees. As of 1961 it had 17,000--for fewer Indians. Fourteen years ago the Bureau asked for \$40,000,000 a year of taxpayers money. In 1961 its appropriation was \$200,000,000."

"It isn't healthy for the country," she said, "to have a bureau that gets bigger and bigger when we have less and less Indians, and it isn't good for the Indians."

The two bills senators brought to Nespelem in their brief cases, she added, will mean more and more power for a bigger and bigger Bureau of Indian Affairs doing less and less for the Indians unless they are changed before they become law.

Mrs. Scofield asked senators to write a bill definitely and finally ending the reservation by 1968. She asked that Interior Secretary Stuart Udall be directed to distribute now some \$1,500,000 awarded tribesmen more than a year ago on a per capita basis, not spent to buy more land for the reservation. She insisted a Bureau policy be ended as to buying land and modifying the reservation unless Indians themselves are permitted to vote on how their money is spent.

(MORE)

How did Mrs. Scofield get into Indian affairs?

"Two years ago my husband, Grant Scofield, was named part of an Oroville Chamber of Commerce committee to study the Indian reservation system," she began.

With husbandly dexterity--and being supremely busy as an apple warehouse superintendent--he turned his project over to wife Ruth for help. The Oroville Chamber Monday of this week made her finding theirs with comment that both locally and nationally as far away as Viet Nam women seem to be better heard than men.

Congressman Walter Horan, she told senators, had promised for a year to meet with Indians and Oroville people. He, she said, by-passed chamber members when he visited Oroville and gave the Indians a complete brush-off.

Senator Jackson, she said, ignored many of the tribesmen and their welfare when he submitted a bill only partially approved.

"I think he'd be particularly sensitive now when he's running for reelection," she declared. "If we don't speak up in these small places now and he's elected again we'll be ignored politely and completely by him for another six years up here."

Interior Secretary Udall, she said, insists on spending Indian income from reservation timber sales to buy more land for reservations in the face of congressional action as far back as 1947 demanding phasing out of the reservation.

"Only a quarter of the 4,600 Colville tribesmen now live on the reservation," she told the committee. "The federal government collects \$1,900,000 a year--mostly from sale of Indian timber. Their usual policy is to give each Indian \$150 a year of this--which totals \$700,000."

(MORE)

Value of the Colville reservation as estimated by the Stanford Research Institute is \$30,000 for each tribesman. The Bureau, she said, nationally now has unlimited control of Indian land as large as all six New England states plus New Jersey and Maryland.

Mrs. Scofield asked the senatorial committee to direct the Indian bureau to furnish it with the list of names of the 4,600 Colville tribesmen which she says now is given only to those who want the reservation to be continued forever. She asked the list be made available to all Indians organizations on the reservation.

She concluded:

"If Congress is too apathetic to get justice for Indians, then can we expect anything better for the other races which make up America?"

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