

Mr. Senator or Congressman:

Please do not throw this letter away. We Indians are American citizens and voters and we need help.

E. J. Wilton, Chairman  
Tacoma Council,  
Yakima Indian Nation



TACOMA COUNCIL, YAKIMA INDIAN NATION

E. J. Wilton, Chairman  
Route 12, Box 192  
Tacoma, Washington

Newspaper reports have it that the Yakima Indians are to be turned over to the State of Washington, August 8, 1958.

We represent the vast majority of the enrolled members of the Yakima Tribes and we are desirous that Federal supervision be terminated as soon as possible, that we be made amenable to State laws; that we have the same privileges and responsibilities as other citizens of the State of Washington. Such citizenship means that each individual may handle his own affairs and property. This is in line, as we understand it, with the present Republican administration program.

We are not willing to be turned over to the State and be governed by a State Bureau. Such would be just as bad, or worse, than the present Indian Bureau, controlled from Washington, D. C.

We want Federal supervision terminated in an orderly way. However, we are handicapped by a self interested tribal council, which tribal council was authorized by the Act of August 9, 1946 (60 Stat. 968) a law which was designed to carry forward the philosophies of the Wheeler-Howard Act which heretofore had been overwhelmingly rejected by the Yakima Indians.

The provisions of the Act of August 9, 1946, before its enactment, were improperly and dishonestly explained by the then Indian Bureau agents and officials. For several years before the enactment of the said Act of August 9, 1946, such Indian Bureau officials, agents and clerks came upon the Yakima Reservation and carried on a vicious campaign of lies, promises, deception and enticement, urging the Indians' support of such a measure.

Ever since the enactment of the 1946 law, and since the Indians discovered the real intent of this statute, there has been general continuing dissatisfaction among the Indians.

In the 82nd Congress (August 16, 1951) Senator Cain introduced Senate Bill 2013 providing for the repeal of said 1946 Act, and in the 83rd Congress Senator Butler, of Nebraska introduced Senate Bill 333, providing for the repeal of said Act of 1946.

When hearings are held before the Committees of Congress on such bills, who are permitted to come to Washington to testify concerning such legislation? Yes, this self-interested Tribal Council selects many of its own membership to come to Washington, appropriates money out of our tribal fund for its expenses, which includes a very high per diem, transportation and other expenses. Then they proceed to Washington, testify in opposition to such legislation, stay in Washington for several days, have a good time for themselves, all at the expense of the Tribe. Much different when we want to be represented at such hearings before the Committees of Congress, we are compelled to pay our own expenses, and we represent the majority of the members of the Tribes.

*about 900 Indians mixed blood*

*they have now - all they need to do is make application for removal of Reservations*



For example, about a year or so ago, S. 333 and S. 1048, companion Bill H.R. 8081, were considered by a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; three delegates from our group favored the enactment of S. 333 and opposed the enactment of S. 1048 and H.R. 8081. The Council delegates, consisting of several members of the Council opposed S. 333 and favored S. 1048 and H.R. 8081.

S. 1048 and H.R. 8081 provides for purchase of lands for the Tribes from Tribal funds, funds which belong to us and we assert inasmuch as this money belongs to the members of the Tribe, we should have some voice in determining how this money should be expended.

Please note specially:

In place of H.R. 8081 and S. 1048, which died with the expiration of the 83rd Congress, as a similar bill H.R. 1801, was introduced by Congressman Holmes. This bill was introduced on January 10, 1955, and a few days after that date, in January, the bill was submitted to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for consideration. None of us Indians were notified either of its introduction nor of the hearing thereon before the Committee. It is reported that Congressman Holmes was the only witness before the Committee. A joint subcommittee of the Senate and House on Indian Affairs held hearings on the similar bills, S. 1048 and H.R. 8081, during the 83rd Congress. Our group was represented by two delegates at these hearings, opposing the enactment of same. These hearings were not closed and so far as we know they are still open for further testimony.

*Under* Under date of February 22, 1955, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs submitted its report (H.Rpt. No. 68) to the House recommending its passage, and the bill is now on the House calendar awaiting action for passage. In said House Report No. 68, the Committee purports to set forth the reasons for its enactment. This report also includes the report of the Secretary of the Interior, signed by Orme Lewis, Assistant Secretary, which report of the Secretary recommends its enactments. Among other things, these reports cite the "complicated" fractionated heirship lands. Why should that situation be so complicated, what is done under State law? H.R. 1801 is designed to perpetuate an Indian reservation. What will happen is this, those of us who are competent, able and willing to handle our own affairs, when asking for a patent in fee to be issued to us and when wanting to sell our holdings, we will be compelled to sell to the so-called Tribal Council for a price which it desires to pay -- and whose money is used for such payments? OURS.

We are mindful of what is happening, and has happened, on this and other Reservations in this business of exchanging, consolidating, purchasing lands for tribal use, etc. The Indians who sell to the tribal councils are compelled to take the appraisal of the tribal councils, which in many instances are many times lower than can be had from outside buyers.

Now Mr. Secretary, you mention the recommendations of the Tribal Council or the Governing Body. We assert that this so-called Tribal Council is illegally constituted. Ever since the enactment of the Act of 1946, there has been general expressions of dissatisfaction among the members of the tribe because said Act was obtained by fraud and deception.

The provisions of H.R. 1801 are of great importance to the members of the Yakima Tribes. Why not give us a chance to vote as to whether or not this proposed legislation is acceptable to the majority of the members of the tribe. We mean a vote at an election patterned after State elections, not Tribal Council supervised elections. Also, every member of the Tribes should have an opportunity to vote whether living on or off the Reservation.



Also, we respectfully request that we have the privilege of proving to you that a vast majority of the members of the tribes favor the repeal of the 1946 Act. However, we want an election patterned after the State election laws and that all members, whether living on or off the Reservation, to participate. Such procedure is another manifestation of democracy.

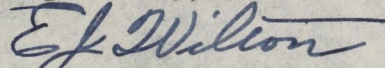
We submit that the provisions of H.R. 1801 is not in accord with the expressed policy of Congress, nor the expressed policy of the Eisenhower administration.

A communication received from the Department of the Interior, signed by Mr. Gifford, is apparently in answer to a letter which I wrote you lately and which seems to have been referred to this secretary.

It is couched in the same language as those sent out during the last administration, and it would seem that President Eisenhower has not been able to put enough of his own people in the Interior.

Mr. Gifford says for me to "discuss the matter" with the Indian agent and the Tribal Council. He knows very well how they stand on this matter. He also knows, or should know, that the Tribal Council does not represent the Yakima Nation.

Respectfully,



E. J. Wilton, Chairman  
Tacoma Council, Yakima Indian Nation