

ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS, INC.  
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FOR RELEASE AMs and PMs  
FEBRUARY 5 AND THEREAFTER

New York, N. Y., February 00, 1960.....A speedy move toward the final solution of the State of Florida's 100-year-old wrangle with an errant group of Seminole Indians living in the Everglades swamps is now possible as the result of an agreement by the Federal Government on January 30 to set aside funds to start development program planning for this group.

The Association on American Indian Affairs, which has been working with the Everglades Tribe of Miccosukee Seminoles since last April to bring them to agreement with the State of Florida on the conditions under which the State would place approximately 200,000 acres of land in trust for its tribes, said today that all conditions holding up the trust agreement have now been met.

A decision by the State has hinged on the Federal Government's willingness to set up an economic and social program for the Miccosukees. The land involved lies between the Tamiami Trail and the Big Cypress Reservation on which a federally protected Seminole Tribe lives. Some 300 people living in the swamps and along the Trail make up the population of a colorful Seminole group which has long refused reservation status and yet has had no assurance of continued use of the state land on which they work and live, entirely self-supporting. They, with the Seminoles of the Dania, Brighton, and Big Cypress Reservations, and a few tribally unaffiliated Seminoles, would be the users of the future state trust land.

By agreement of the tribes, the administration would be in the hands of the Seminoles, one of the points on which state officials have been divided during the past year, although Governor LeRoy Collins and his Cabinet committed the state last August to the placing of the trail and swamp country in trust for both tribes, contingent on a federal contribution toward an

economic and social program for the Miccosukees. The Seminole Tribe of Florida would be given use of a part of the existing state reservation adjoining the Big Cypress Reservation, with the Miccosukees using the remainder, plus 143,000 acres in the Everglades.

While the Governor and Cabinet of Florida awaited a decision by the Department of the Interior, the Association on American Indian Affairs proposed a program for the Miccosukees by which the U. S. Congress would be asked to authorize in 1960 a 10-year development program for these Indians. It asked for an appropriation of \$25,000 for the first planning year of the program during which an estimate would be arrived at of the total cost of such a program over the successive nine years. It envisaged costs rising to a peak in the fifth year and declining toward the ninth, with Congress making annual appropriations based upon annual reports and recommendations of a Board of Consultants in which the Tribe, the Interior Department, the State, the State University, and a citizens' organization would be represented.

By the AAIA's plan the first year of planning was to have been under the Bureau of Indian Affairs and thereafter under the administration of the Miccosukee Tribe. Ultimately the plan called for a nine-year U.S. Public Health Service program, building of a community center for child and adult education, and the development of a few tourist enterprises, such as an Indian village, a restaurant, and an arts and crafts production and sales center.

By the Department of the Interior's offer to finance a first year of planning, the way is opened for the State of Florida to proceed with the execution of a trust agreement with its tribes, the Association states. An offer by the Department's Commissioner of Indian Affairs to assign a Bureau of Indian Affairs specialist to the tribe for a period of individual and family planning was made in a letter to Governor Collins on January 30. As briefly outlined by Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons, the program would enlist local aid in developing economic opportunities for the tribe. The planning period would be "for a period necessary to bring the Miccosukees up to a desired standard of living" and the Indians themselves would "increasingly administer the program" after the planning stage was ended.

"Every consideration which has caused Florida to hesitate in entrusting this land to the Indians and for the performance of which the state set up conditions, has now been clarified," according to the Association's executive director, Miss La Verne Madigan. "The tribes are agreed on who will administer the State-owned lands; certain stipulation in the Tribe's

contract with its attorney, giving rise to a fear that a lien could be placed on Miccosukee trust property, have been waived by the attorney; the State's decision to retain title to the land precludes any future land claim by the Tribe against Florida; and the Miccosukees, who have long held out against accepting a tribal constitution as an admission of the sovereignty of the United States, are now willing to relate themselves to the Federal Government. The State can now move to complete its act of generosity toward the Florida tribes."

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March 7, 1961

For Immediate Release

Oliver La Farge, President of the Association on American Indian Affairs, praised the Democratic platform promise to respect Indian treaties, and called upon President Kennedy to take Executive action to prevent the flooding of 9,000 acres of Seneca land in connection with the Allegheny River Project (Kinzua Dam).

In a letter to the President of February 28, released today, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author stated that "the last hope of the Seneca people lies with the Office of the President, for funds have been appropriated by Congress, and the Courts have granted a legal right to the Federal Government unilaterally to break treaties with Indian tribes."

Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, former chairman of the T.V.A., has designed an alternative to the Kinzua Dam in the Conewango-Cattaraugus flood control project, which would save the Seneca reservation, according to Mr. La Farge.

The letter points out that Morgan's plan is considered by some to be superior to that of the Army Engineers from a technical point of view, and that it would cost the American tax-payer considerably less. The spokesman for the Indian rights organization concludes with a plea that the President "direct the Army Corps of Engineers to cease working until an independent, impartial investigation of the alternative project is undertaken and completed," and in the event that the proposal is feasible "to request Congress to authorize it as a substitute for the presently planned Allegheny River project."

The Allegany Reservation, on which the present city of Salamanca New York is now located, was set aside for the Senecas, an Iroquois tribe, under the Treaty of November 11, 1794. Article III of this treaty provides: "Now the United States acknowledges all the land within the aforementioned boundaries, to be the property of the Seneka nation, and the United States will never claim the same, nor disturb the Seneka nation...in the free use and enjoyment thereof; but it shall remain theirs, until they choose to sell the same to the people of the United States, who have the right to purchase."

The full text of Mr. La Farge's letter follows:

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Advance Release

An editorial by La Verne Madigan, Executive Director, Association on American Indian Affairs, appearing in February newsletter, Indian Affairs, an Association publication.

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Vigil in the Everglades

Florida's Governor and Cabinet (Board of Internal Trustees) are about to decide whether to place approximately 200,000 acres of state-owned land under the administration of the Miccosukee Seminoles.

Governor Collins in August, and again in November, stated the conditions under which the State would perform this act of justice and generosity. The conditions have been met.

The Miccosukees and the Seminoles of the Federal reservations ended their factional strife and have jointly petitioned the State to allow the Miccosukees to administer the State-owned lands for the benefit of all Florida Indians.

The attorney for the Miccosukees has waived a clause in his contract which it was feared by some might give him the right to place a lien on Miccosukee trust property---a clause which, in any event, was invalid under Federal Indian law and would not have survived court test.

The State's decision to retain title to the land, while placing it in trust for Indian use under Miccosukee administration, precludes any future Miccosukee claim against Florida on the ground that a land-grant implies recognition of the tribe's right to that and the larger area they once roamed. Further, the Association on American Indian Affairs has offered to contribute the services of its legal staff for the writing of a trust agreement protective of both Florida's and the Miccosukees' interest.

The U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs has offered to finance a Miccosukee planning program which could serve as a basis of a federally assisted program of economic and social development.

The Miccosukees, who have seen themselves as an unconquered, sovereign people, said that they want to relate themselves, in the manner of other tribes, to the United States.

A year ago the Miccosukees were fighting for security on their native land and with the recklessness of those who fight alone and without hope. We made them give up the dark comfort of absolute despair. We made them place their trust in the friendship and power of their fellow-citizens. We made them believe that, with patience, they can fulfill their aspiration within the democratic framework of Florida and the United States.

Florida's moment for action is here. We are confident that she will deal generously and compassionately with the straight-backed, bold-eyed Miccosukee people. It will be to the honor of all Americans if this last of the Indian tribes to come to terms comes with head high.

Advance release, text of lead story in February  
"Indian Affairs," a newsletter, Association on  
American Indian Affairs

A FIRST STEP TOWARD A FUTURE  
FOR FLORIDA'S FORGOTTEN TRIBE

If and when the State of Florida turns over 200,000 acres of state land in trust status to all its Seminole Indians, the Federal Government will participate in the problem of Florida's troubled and troubling Everglades Miccosukees to the extent of financing a first year of economic and social planning with individuals and families of that tribe.

In a letter to Governor LeRoy Collins on January 30, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Commissioner, Glenn L. Emmons, stated that the Bureau would set aside sufficient funds for a qualified specialist to design a development program for the tribe and enlist the assistance of "knowledgeable" local people known to be friendly to the Indians' aspirations. The Bureau would consult with the Everglades Tribe of Miccosukee Seminoles and State officials on rules and procedures under which the Miccosukees would administer the land.

This Bureau proposal followed the submission to the Department of the Interior and the Bureau by the Association on American Indian Affairs on January 25 of a 10-year development program for the Miccosukee Seminoles, to which the Tribe itself has agreed. A first year of preliminary planning with on-the-spot Bureau of Indian Affairs' assistance was requested in the AAIA recommendation.

If the complex of state, federal and tribal interests finds common ground soon, as is urgent, it will mean an end to the State of Florida's long delay in placing in state trust for its tribes and under Miccosukee administration, the land which comprises the Miccosukees' present living territory on the Tamiami Trail and the Everglades Swamps.

The Everglades land question has been held up for the past six years while the lack of accord between the state's tribes, the Federal Government's unwillingness to enter the picture, and the state's hesitation over how to proceed, increased the Miccosukees' bitterness over their land insecurity. In the meantime, activities of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in draining the swamps has threatened the livelihood of the Miccosukees and presaged future real estate activities which could wipe out the tribe's way of life.

Today this independent and colorful people for whom the assurance of trust possession of their homelands seems almost within reach last year waits in anxiety while the machinery of federal and state governments still stands at dead center.

On August 11, 1959, the Florida Cabinet committed itself to set aside the land for the Seminole Indian Tribe, represented by the organized reservation groups, and for the 300 independent Miccosukee Seminoles. By November 16 the two tribes had agreed upon a proposal on use of the land by both. At this time the Indians of the Dania, Brighton, and Big Cypress Reservations, among whom there are also some Miccosukees who have accepted reservation life, agreed that the land should be open for use by all the Indians under administration of the Miccosukees. Consistently, the Miccosukee majority had resisted vigorously suggestions that they join the reservation groups, and asserted their identity as a separate tribe.

Governor Collins, in the late months of 1959, had already indicated his own and his Cabinet's willingness to act speedily on the land problem. In addition, State Attorney General Richard W. Ervin had accepted the Association on American Indian Affairs' offer of cooperation in drawing up a trust agreement protective of both tribal and state interests.

A contention of the Association on American Indian Affairs during the past year of frequent consultations by its executive director, La Verne

Madigan, with the Florida tribes, the Governor, the Cabinet, and Department of the Interior officials, has been that the crux of the Indian conflict in the state was the Miccosukees' fierce hunger for security on the land they occupied, and that these Indians, unlike the reservation Seminoles, would never accept a claims settlement of money in lieu of land. The Association also urged the setting up of a federal program for the smaller tribe and found the Miccosukees responsive to the idea. Details of the AAIA program for the tribe, as presented to the Department of the Interior, are contained in the editorial box accompanying this news story. The full text of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' offer of participation in a year of planning for the tribe is printed in an adjacent column.

Working through its Florida affiliates, the Seminole Indian Association and the Friends of the Seminoles, the Association on American Indian Affairs has been active in the interest of the Miccosukees and the organized Seminole tribe since April, 1959, when the AAIA issued a field report, "The Most Independent People," which was widely circulated in the state and elsewhere. The report sought to interpret the tangled Indian sovereignty and land ownership issues which had kept the Miccosukee Seminoles at loggerheads with their state and federal governments for 100 years and prevented a joint settlement of tribal claims.

The Miccosukees differ in important aspects of their chosen life pattern from that of their fellow Indians. Conservative, tradition-directed, and resistant to assimilation into the non-Indian culture, they have said they would rather have an assurance of permanent right of occupancy and use to the land they now live on than a share in all the Seminole money claims now before the U. S. Claims Commission.

At long last, with the presentation of the Federal proposal to finance a year of tribal planning, a first step is possible toward a future for Florida's forgotten tribe.

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FOR RELEASE TO A.M.'s and P.M.'s APRIL 23

NEW YORK, N. Y., April 22.....Oliver La Farge, author and anthropologist, today described the future of the American Indian, under the present Federal Government's plans, as that of "a broken creature -- neither white nor Indian, who will be as good as dead." He said it was essentially the same program "that Russia, not long ago, enforced against the Kulaks."

The president of the Association on American Indian Affairs, 48 East 86th Street, New York City, made this prediction to approximately 200 members of the non-profit organization at their Annual Meeting this afternoon (April 22) in the American Museum of Natural History.

"In the present-day U. S. Indian Service," he said, "there are hatchet men who know that the way to promotion and pay is through terrifying small, weak, poor tribes into accepting termination." And, documenting a bitter denunciation of the steadily worsening economic situation of Indian tribes throughout the country as a result of Government policies, Mr. La Farge said the United States is carrying on a virtual assault against the helpless, unprepared people of the Indian reservations.

He pictured the situation as one fostered by "inconspicuous" subordinates of the Interior Department, acting for "ignorant but well-intentioned higher officials." At the same time, he said, "half-truths and misrepresentations" on the part of the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs to a concerned, but ill-informed public, come "remarkably close to plain lying." Mr. La Farge stated that "every device of obstruction with which a powerful arm of government can block and bewilder ill-educated, poor people has been brought into play."

A second speaker on the A.A.I.A. program, Carl Whitman, chairman of the Three Affiliated tribes, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, Newtown, N. D., reported on the participation of American Indian visitors in March to Puerto Rico to adapt for Indian reservation use here Puerto Rico's first steps toward economic self-help.

In his briefing of the A.A.I.A. membership on American Indian termination

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problems to date, Mr. La Farge enumerated instances in which several tribes are being summarily victimized, stripped of needed land base and the small manufacturing enterprises they need to rebuild their economy, or terrorized with sudden announcements that the tribes are to be terminated.

He lashed out at what he described as falsely-encouraging attitudes of Government Indian Bureau officials who, he said, smile in pretended admiration of some Indians' attempts to get economic programs under way while at the same time these officials are hastening their work of liquidating the Indian.

Reviewing the recent history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' conduct of Northern Cheyenne land sales at Lame Deer, Montana, Mr. La Farge demanded that the Department of the Interior "do the only reasonable and honorable thing -- cancel the sale of the heart of the Cheyennes' reservation and permit the tribe to buy the land."

The Government justifies as the basis of its actions, Mr. La Farge stated, House Concurrent Resolution 108 which Indian Bureau officials take to be a mandate to "de-Indianize" the Indians. He said Indians and non-Indians must join in insisting that Congress cancel this resolution in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 3. This is a bill providing that the governing program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs shall be an American Point 4-type program for developing American Indian communities and preserving Indian identity.

Mr. La Farge condemned what he called the "hoop snake argument" of the U. S. Indian Bureau. The Bureau, he said, insists that it cannot halt its "supervised" land sales because they are made at the owners' request and to do so deprives these owners of their rights as individuals. Such sales are conducted by the Government on behalf of Indians incompetent to manage their own affairs. This assertion of paramount individual rights and best interests is fraudulent and merely a doctrine of convenience, according to Mr. La Farge. Innumerable cases exist, he said, in which, in non-Indian communities, individual rights are repeatedly subordinated to the welfare of the community.

Most of these supervised sales are made, the Association's president charged, "under the whip of dire poverty, cold, starvation. The more land is sold, the more nearly impossible it is to build a tolerable economy, hence the more people become desperately poor, so poor that they will sell their land in order to stay alive one more year. This is the hoop snake. It takes its tail in its mouth and rolls on and on, and if it runs into you, you discover that its sting is deadly."

Examples of the Government's "blackboard technique: You get rid of what you don't want by rubbing it off the board," were described by Mr. La Farge as:

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The Fort Sill Apaches, near Anadarko, Oklahoma. They rejected on January 25 and again in February a draft bill for termination laid before them by Indian Bureau officials. They were terrified at first, Mr. La Farge stated, on being told that the law on termination had already been passed. "There is no such bill," Mr. La Farge said. "This little story is the history of a tissue of lies."

The Omahas and Winnebagos of Nebraska, already the poorer by the sale of 8,000 acres of their land, have been told their Agency may be moved to a distant city. The Omahas have been trying with the aid of the A.A.I.A., and the University of Nebraska, to develop a program of economic self-help.

Montana Blackfeet have asked for a moratorium on "supervised" land sales. They want a joint Blackfeet-Government committee study of the effect of these sales upon the tribal future.

Attempts are being made, Mr. La Farge stated, to frighten even the Navajos -- a people who have been most able to improve their economy -- with the shadow of termination. But it is, he said, "a confession of a vacancy of mind to see termination as the only thing in the Indians' future. This is the outlook of people unable really to think."

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FOR RELEASE AMs and PMs FEBRUARY 24

New York, N. Y.....Indian community development is a newly-furbished version of an old idea running from reservation to reservation with increased force in Indian country today.

On-reservation birth rates are so far outstripping the off-reservation relocation of Indian families seeking urban experience and jobs that economic and social development of the reservations themselves has become the only solution possible to meet the growing Indian needs in health, education and economic opportunity on the same level as that achieved by non-Indians.

Directors of the Association on American Indian Affairs, meeting in New York last week, pointed to these facts and the mounting requests of tribes for the Association's help in creating a climate in their home states favorable to the continuance and the social-economic development of Indian communities.

The AAIA leadership said their legislative program for 1959 will push HCR 40, a bill introduced by Representative George McGovern of South Dakota, embodying an American "point 4" program of economic aid to tribal communities; a land purchase program recognizing that Indian communities are here to stay; and a \$20 million increase in the Federal Indian Bureau's Revolving Loan Fund for use by the tribes in their land consolidation plans.

Along the same lines, one Indian Economic Development Bill (S. 953 introduced by Senator William Langer, North Dakota) now before the Congress provides for \$20 million in programs of assistance to Indian tribes and their members to establish reservation industries and other activities to provide employment, and to encourage private enterprise to establish such industries and activities.

The veteran Indian Affairs organization also said it would expand its own field operations in Indian communities. As part of its total program, the organization carries on pilot experiments in race relations between Indian and neighboring white communities. Such interracial community relationship programs logically lead to community development plans by the tribes themselves, La Verne Madigan, executive

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director, Association on American Indian Affairs said.

One such pilot program is taking place on the Plains States reservations of Nebraska and the Dakotas where an Omaha-Winnebago community relations program turned into a community development plan has just staged a state-county-tribal conference on law and order which is expected to bring the Indians of that state their first satisfactory law enforcement since 1953. (A recommendation from "Present Relations of the Federal Government to the American Indian," House Committee Print No. 38, recently released by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, is that the Secretary of the Interior cause a study to be made of the trend in law and order administration on Indian reservations.)

As part of the same Great Plains pilot area project, a training course for tribal judges at a justice of the peace level will begin in early March at the University of South Dakota, according to the sponsoring Association's executive director. A curriculum workshop which aims at improving the way school children are taught about Indians, to be given successively at the Chadron State Teachers College, the University of Nebraska, and the University of South Dakota is also part of the AAIA, tribal, and local non-Indian community planning.

Announcement was made by the AAIA directors, of an affiliation between the private membership organization with the Nebraska We Shake Hands Advisory Council. The Nebraska affiliate is one of five Association branches and affiliates admitted and pending.

The AAIA's directors report said annual receipts of the organization have almost tripled since 1952, and in the same period its membership and contributors' list has more than doubled, indicating a remarkable acceleration of the national interest in the fate of the aboriginal population of the United States.

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FOR RELEASE Friday AMs and PMs, November 14

New York, N.Y. .... For the third time in six years the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has gone hat-in-hand to Washington to battle for the privilege of electing their own Principal Chief, instead of having this officer appointed by the Secretary of the Interior without the consent of the Indians. The outcome is still in doubt.

That is, the leaders of the Choctaw Indians would have gone hat-in-hand and in person, says the Association on American Indian Affairs, if the Interior Department had not told them to write a letter instead of sending a delegation to explain their desire for a democratic election and how such an election could be held at no cost to the taxpayers of the United States.

Harry W. Belvin, Durant, Oklahoma, the present Principal Chief, who has survived in this post during the past two elections, states that he was informed in a letter from Roger Ernst, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, that the Department considers the balloting process too costly, although this cost would be paid out of Choctaw Nation funds. According to Mr. Belvin, Secretary Ernst also said that election was impractical because of the difficulty of locating current mailing addresses of some individual Choctaws.

Oliver La Farge, president of the Association on American Indian Affairs, which has twice before successfully gone to bat for the Choctaws on this same issue, commented as follows:- "If Democracy can be ruled out for the Choctaws on the ground it is expensive and inefficient, a frightening thing will have happened in America. Of course Democracy is expensive! The glory of our people, including the Choctaws, is their insistence upon paying the cost. Of course Democracy is inefficient! It is the system of government of free, unregimented men."

Under a 1906 Act of Congress the Secretary of the Interior has the authority, delegated by the President, to appoint the Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation

without the consent of the Choctaw people. In 1934 the Indians were encouraged to hold a convention in the heart of the old Choctaw Nation territory in Oklahoma, and nomination and election were immediately followed by Interior Department appointment. Thereafter, until 1952, the right of the Choctaws to designate their own Principal Chief was considered established, and Interior Department appointment was regarded as nominal.

In a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, dated October 21, Mr. La Farge described impediments put in the way of democratic balloting by the Choctaws since 1952 as "both ludicrous and sinister". Mr. La Farge wrote that Interior officials in 1952 had not wanted the Choctaws to continue the office of a full-time chief, that they had "yielded ungracefully" to protests and then waited months to make the final confirmation. In a June, 1954 referendum-election, the same candidate for Principal Chief received 2502 votes, and his nearest rival 52, but the Interior Department set aside the results and insisted upon a run-off election. The form of ballot mailed to the Choctaw voters at that time was a "masterwork of obfuscation", according to Mr. La Farge.

Mr. La Farge expressed surprise at the failure of the Department of the Interior to seize this opportunity to put into practice Secretary Fred A. Seaton's September 18 announcement of a reversed Federal Indian policy which would seem to commit the Department to recognition of the principle of Government by consent of the governed in Indian affairs.

According to interim-Principal Chief Belvin, whose term of office has been extended until December 18 pending Interior Department appointment of his successor, a mail referendum-election to fill the office is not necessary. An alternative method which worked successfully in 1934, he said, would make use of a convention in Choctaw country through which instructed delegates could nominate and elect. Another alternative would be the setting up of ballot boxes in the counties most heavily populated by Choctaws, the balloting being under the supervision of Interior Department officials with the cost being paid out of Choctaw funds. "Nowhere else in the United States," said Chief Belvin, "is the electoral process dispensed with because 100% of the voters cannot be reached by mail. The privilege and responsibility of voting is thought to rest upon the voters."

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