

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

news release

STATEMENT ON INDIAN AFFAIRS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROGERS C. B. MORTON

Press Conference, October 4, 1971, Washington, D.C.

I have called this news conference today to announce a series of actions relating to Indian water rights, contracts, roads, self-government, and legislative programs.

My purpose in taking these initiatives towards Indian self-government is setting a course for the Bureau of Indian Affairs designed to protect Indian resources and deal effectively with the roots of Indian dissatisfaction -- poverty, unemployment, and inadequate educational background. In my opinion this approach will do much to advance the cause of the Indian people of this Nation.

First, Water Rights. Most reservations are in the arid West and depend for development upon adequate water supplies. In the past, Indian rights have not been protected. I intend to change that. I intend to do my best to see that Indians get their fair share of water.

To insure effective advocacy of Indian water rights, I am establishing an Indian Water Rights Office. It will serve as an interim body until enactment of legislation proposed by the President which calls for creation of an Indian Trust Counsel Authority.

This Office will include members of the Solicitor's Office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Geological Survey. It will be the focal point for seeing that appropriate action is taken to protect Indian water rights -- including timely preparation of suits for submission to the Justice Department for filing in the courts.

This Office will report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and he will report directly to me on water rights matters. In this way, we can assure that proper emphasis and priority continues to be given to this activity. I am also inviting the National Tribal Chairmen's Association to appoint an advisory board to work with the Indian Water Rights Office.

After further consultation with Indian leaders, we will announce the director, deputy director and other appointees to this Office. Supplementing their work will be field teams correspondingly constituted.

Two million dollars will be funded for the first year's operation of the Indian Water Rights Office and its field team program.

I have recommended to the Justice Department that it file suit to protect underground water rights of the Lummi Indians in the State of Washington. The Department is also intervening in the Escondido case now before the Federal Power Commission, and in a State of Idaho proceeding (Duck Valley). Moreover, the Department also intends to intervene in another Federal Power Commission matter involving the Chippewa Dam.

Next, Contracting and Self-Government Programs.

The expressed desire of many Indian tribes and groups is to contract with the BIA so that they may provide services hitherto performed by the BIA. In addition to the 724 contracts with Indians that have been renewed since May 1, 1971, I have approved 93 new contracts with a total value of \$2,435,000.

These numbers show that contracting has by no means come to a halt despite allegations from a few quarters that this is the case. Nevertheless there is much more to be done in this direction.

I feel confident that the House and Senate Interior Committees will soon provide us an opportunity to appear before them in support of the President's proposed new legislation providing for broader contracting authority.

In the meantime we will continue to work out self-governing agreements under the authority of the Snyder Act, the Johnson-O'Malley Act and the Buy Indian Act. To the greatest extent possible within budgetary restraint we will continue to issue contracts for the procurement of goods and services from Indians and Indian groups.

Moreover, we are establishing a full-time training program to train BIA employees and prospective contractors in procedures and methods relating to the contracting process, to insure that effective arrangements will result. We will also work with Indian organizations, tribal or otherwise to help them equip themselves to qualify for contracts. Existing training projects now handled under the Office of Economic Opportunity will be expanded. Tribal and government management training contracts will be set up in cooperation with the Department of Labor.

Next, Roads for Indian Reservations.

A modern network of roads is the prime physical system upon which social and economic development depend. Indian reservation communities live in the 1930's with respect to the adequacy of their surface transportation roadways. This is an obstruction to health services, to day schooling, to industry, tourism, to housing and sanitation.

Until 1935, no roads were constructed on Federally related Indian reservations. Since that time, the pace of construction has fallen far short of being commensurate with highway and road-building in the U. S. as a whole. The Indian areas are doomed to continuing isolation and poverty until modern roads are built. The BIA has developed a comprehensive construction plan under the direction of Alexander McNabb. I am working with the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Transportation to seek funding that will open up Indian communities through modern roads systems.

Now, A Few Comments on Legislation.

I am releasing the text of a letter (attached) of September 20, 1971, from Assistant Secretary Loesch to Senate Interior Committee Chairman Henry Jackson clarifying the Department's position on the importance of items in the President's Indian legislation program. Certainly, the creation of an Indian Trust Counsel Authority is of prime importance to implement the President's program for Indians.

I will be the lead-off witness for the Indian Trust Counsel and other Presidential legislative proposals as soon as the Senate Interior Committee confirms its schedule of hearings on these bills.

I am delighted to see the House and Senate Interior Committee action on the Alaskan Native Claim bill, a matter so important to Indians. The bills reported out are very close to the version proposed by the President. What this shows is that there is a consensus among the Executive and the lawmakers of both parties reflecting fairness and equity in matters vitally affecting this Nation's first Americans. I am sure the other Indian measures proposed by the President will receive equally favorable treatment in Congress.

Now, Two Other Actions I Am Taking.

On the recommendation of the Board of Directors of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association, I am creating an advisory board to assure better communications among the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Secretary's office and the national Indian community. As the NTCA Board suggested, the group will be comprised of 15 members, including representatives from the National Congress of American Indians, the National Tribal Chairmen's Association, and other Indian groups, both reservation and otherwise.

I am instructing Assistant Secretary Loesch and Commissioner Bruce to have a special briefing prepared on the fiscal year 1973 Budget of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This briefing will be presented for information and advice to officers of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association and of the National Congress of American Indians prior to the Secretary's final approval thereof.

I feel that these measures will help move the BIA efficiently and successfully on its course of implementing President Nixon's program which he outlined in his July 1970 Message to Congress.

But I do not suggest that these steps are the only ones necessary. As further needs become apparent, or additional new directions are needed we are committed to responding constructively to them.

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

COPY

September 20, 1971

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter of September 8 asking again for our view of the relative priority of Administration proposed legislation on Indian affairs.

There are a number of bills before the Committee enumerated in the President's special message of July 8, 1970, as well as another bill, S. 2237, subsequently recommended by this Department.

We believe all of these to be highly important and urge the Congress to act on them during this session. Among them we consider as most important the Indian Trust Counsel authorization and the two Indian self-help bills, S. 1573 and S. 1574. We hope, however, that any need for protracted hearings on any one of these bills would not become an obstacle to early enactment of the others.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Harrison Loesch

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

Honorable Henry M. Jackson
Chairman, Committee on Interior
and Insular Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

ATTACHMENT "A"

<u>NAME OF CONTRACT</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Cherokee Boys Club	Dump Truck Rental	9/14	\$15,000.
Miccosukee Corporation	Management & Operation of educational and social welfare programs for Miccosukee Indian people.	5/14	23,904.
Cherokee Boys Club	Youth Conservation Corps Camp	5/17	35,800.
Cherokee Boys Club	Housing Improvement Program	9/13	14,416.
Shoshone-Piaute Tribe Duck Valley	Land subjugation	6/28	234,751.
Less S. Thomas, LST Construction	Provide and install L.P. Gas System, Keams Canyon	6/28	25,182
Blackfeet Indian Housing Authority	Housing Development	5/5	5,000.
Blackfeet Land Management Service	Irrigation Pasture Demonstration	5/27	2,650.
Blackfeet Indian Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/27	10,200
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	Forest Rehabilitation	5/17	5,000
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority	Housing Development	5/19	6,000
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/27	8,400.
Ft. Belknap Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/27	4,200.
Ft. Peck Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/13	4,200.

ATTACHMENT B

<u>NAME OF CONTRACTOR</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Lummi Tribe	Ground Water Study	5/20	7,000
Spokane Tribe	Water Resources Inventory	5/17	25,000
Yakima Tribe	Water Resources Inventory	5/17	36,000
Colville Tribe	Training for AFDC Recipient	5/1	6,000
Colville Tribe	Community Development Project	5/25	7,000
Shoshone Bannock	Training of Truck Drivers and Heavy Equipment Operators	5/1	4,480
Warm Springs Tribe	Furnish Field Data for Timber Sales	5/3	5,803
Quileute Tribe	Management Services for Organizing a Housing Authority	6/17	1,500
Swinomish Tribe	Management Services for HUD low rent projects	6/16	1,500
Lummi Tribe	Water Resources Inventory	6/7	20,000
Lower Elwha Tribal Council	Management Services for HUD projects	6/9	1,500
Frank Archambault	Study of Modular Home Industry	6/7	3,000
Tulalip Tribe	Construct Duplex building	6/7	13,000
Muckleshoot Tribe	Home repairs	6/7	6,930
Quileute Tribe	Survey of resources	6/2	5,000
Muckleshoot	Management Services for HUD	6/1	2,000
Quinault	Management Services for HUD	6/1	2,000
Yakima Indian Contractors	Repair water line	6/4	1,475

ATTACHMENT "C"

<u>NAME OF CONTRACT</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Northern Cheyenne Housing Authority	Housing Landscape Development	5/18	\$3,000
Northern Cheyenne Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/21	11,000
Chippewa-Cree Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/24	5,400
Chippewa-Cree Tribe	General Assistance & Tribal Work . Experience Program	7/1	83,000
Wind River Housing Authority	Home Ownership Training	5/4	4,200
Shoshone & Arapahoe	Housing Improvement Program	7/1	75,000
R.C.K. Inc., Albuquerque	Maintenance & Custodial Services - SWPT Inst.	7/1	348,413
R.C.K. Inc. Albuquerque	Install water filter Zuni, Blackrock	5/25	21,771
Ramah Navajo Chapter	Tribal Work Experience	5/6	3,125
Southern Ute Tribe, Ignacio	Indian Education	5/27	5,000
Santa Domingo Pueblo	Summer Program	7/1	3,500
Mescalero Apache Tribe	Receiving Home Services	7/1	9,280
All Indian Pueblo Council	Administering Higher Educ. Scholarship Program	7/1	43,650
Zuni Tribe	Compile & Publish Zuni History text	6/3	12,500
Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho	Develop cultural material & publish history text	5/14	15,000
Lukee Enterprises, Grants	Laundry Services	7/21	14,700
Ute Fabricating Ltd. (Ft. Duchesne)	Furniture - Haskell	8/23	23,800
Ute Fabricating Ltd.	Dorm Furniture - Intermountain	8/23	424,502

ATTACHMENT "D"

<u>NAME OF CONTRACTOR</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMT</u>
Smith Electric Co.	Install Electric Service	5/27	2,129
Yakima Indian Contractors	Roofing of building	5/21	2,415
Yakima Indian Contractors	Framing of building	5/4	2,465
Hoopla Valley Tribe	Sidewalks and curbs	5/13	2,030
Hoopla Valley Tribe	Irrigation System	5/21	7,000
Pit River Coop. Assn.	Repairs to Pit River Flume	5/28	2,000
Pala Indian Tribe	Housing Material	5/28	1,000
Tule River Tribe	Repairs to Irrigation Systems	5/27	2,000
Susanville Indian Rancheria	Adult Education Training Center	6/28	2,520
Inter-Tribal Council of California	Welfare Grants	5/24	5,000
Covelo Indian Community	Meetings	8/12	2,000
Ft. Bidwell Indian Tribe	House Repairs (HIP)	5/24	1,200
Hoopla Valley Tribe	Forestry aid services and look-out services	8/27	6,700

ATTACHMENT "E"

<u>NAME OF CONTRACTOR</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	Library reference resource material - Adult Education	5/19	2,835
Yankton Sioux Tribe	Summer Education and Recreation Program	5/21	11,175
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	Summer Education and Recreation Program	5/21	15,500
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	Judicial and Enforcement Services	5/21	15,000
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe	Furnish and Spread Gravel	5/4	5,000
White Eagle Industries Inc.	Mattresses	6/5	6,803.25
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Rental earth moving equipment	5/10	3,000
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Rental earth moving equipment	5/10	2,220
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	Warehouse rental	5/21	1,000
LaRosa Industries	Lawn Services	5/22	3,000
Winnebago Tribe	Provide Indian Culture Program (encampment 50 youth on welfare)	6/21	12,700
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	Advertising & promotion Ft. Thompson Complex	6/22	33,000
Three Affiliated Tribes	Advertising & promotion of Four Beak Park	6/22	35,000
Yankton Sioux Tribe	Employment Assistance	7/1	10,000
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Employment Assistance	7/1	32,393
Nebraska Indian Inter-Tribal	Training and employment project	7/1	13,386
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Scholarship and boarding school processing	7/1	97,450
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Adult education	7/1	9,750

<u>NAME OF CONTRACTOR</u>	<u>ATTACH</u> <u>"F"</u>	<u>TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians		Adult Education	7/9	12,500
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe		Adult Education	7/1	41,282
Devils Lake Sioux Tribe		Operation of St. Michael's School	7/9	220,000
Yankton Sioux Tribe		Judicial Prevention and Enforcement	7/1	32,000
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe		Administer Reservation Program	7/8	25,000
Yankton Sioux Tribe		Administer Community Development Program	7/1	17,900
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe		Administering a guidance and Counselling Program	8/16	26,544
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe		Comprehensive Pilot Program Title VIB	9/15	22,520.7
T.P. Construction		Refinish Gym Floor	9/22	3,490
Donald D. Isberg		School building addition	9/21	47,530.89
T.P. Construction		Rework windows - heating plant	9/21	2,960
Philip S. Byrnes Sr.		Grading and draining on 2.140 miles of Cedar Creek Road	9/9	24,566.59