Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Hart - 343-9431
For Immediate Release: October 27, 1966
Print PDF

Federal supervision over the Ponca Indian Tribe of Nebraska has ended, the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced today. Notification of the action is being published in the Federal Register.

A tribal decision by the Nebraska Poncas in 1956 set the stage for the termination action. Petitions to Congress for appropriate legislation to end Federal supervision led to the 1962 termination law (P.L. 87-629) calling for establishment of a tribal roll and division of tribal assets, if division met with the approval of the majority of' adult tribal members.

The reservation lands of the Nebraska Poncas comprised 847 acres in the northeastern part of the State. Most of the 442 tribal members are off-reservation Indians, residing in Omaha and other urban communities. The tribal vote, following the provisions of the 1962 Congressional act, was overwhelmingly in favor of distribution of assets. The holdings were subsequently liquidated.

Termination of Federal supervision over the Nebraska Poncas brings a halt to special services hitherto provided them by the Federal Government because of their status as Indians. State services and laws, including tax laws, are now applicable to Ponca Indians as well as to other citizens under Nebraska's jurisdiction.

A related group of Poncas -- those residing in Oklahoma--are not affected by termination under Public Law 87-629. The Ponca Tribe of Native Americans of Nebraska organized in 1936 when a constitution and charter were adopted. The Oklahoma Poncas organized separately in 1950. Individuals formerly entitled to be enrolled in both tribes were permitted to retain membership in only one tribe when the Nebraska Ponca Tribal roll was prepared preliminary to termination.

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma Poncas are petitioners in a case pending before the Indian Claims Commission in which they are seeking fair payment for Ponca lands in Nebraska and South Dakota given to the Sioux under a treaty in 1859 between the United States and the Sioux, to which the Poncas were not party. Both the Oklahoma and the Nebraska Poncas may be recipients of an award, after a determination has been made by the Claims Commission of the amount of compensation due, if any.