Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Hart - 343-4306
For Immediate Release: March 5, 1966
Print PDF

John C. Dibbern, a career BIA employee and former university professor, is slated to head Bureau activities in connection with Missouri River Basin development, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash has announced.

With headquarters in Billings, Mont., Dibbern will head a staff of economist, soil scientists, and engineers engaged in continuing studies to protect the interests of Indian landowners in the multi-State Missouri Basin area.

Main activities of the office are: (1) to appraise lands to be taken for water development; (2) to determine irrigation potentials on Indian lands with a view to tie-ins with larger water development projects; and (3) to study the economic and social impact upon Indian communities of Missouri River Basin development in all its aspects--irrigation, flood control, river navigation, hydroelectric power generation, soil erosion control, and fish and wildlife conservation.

Dibbern's career in the Federal Government began with the Forest Service in 1945 While he was completing doctoral work in plant ecology. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

His first post with BIA was at Sells, Ariz., where he directed forestry operations and range management on about three million acres in the Papago, Gila Bend, and San Xavier Indian Reservations. He subsequently was transferred to a similar assignment on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.

In 1956 he became assistant to BlA's Assistant Commissioner for Resources in Washington, D. C., and a year later he was appointed Superintendent of the Colorado River Reservation in Arizona. Prior to his new assignment, he served five years as assistant director of economic development for the Gallup, N. Mex., Area Office of BIA.

Dibbern is a native of Los Angeles, Calif., and an Army veteran of World War II.

He succeeds Walter Fuhriman, who was BlA's Director of the Missouri River Basin Investigation Project for 15 years until his retirement in December 1965.