Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Procedures for updating the membership renewal of the Menominee Indian Tribe were published in the Federal Register of October 17th, 1974 the Department of the Interior announced today.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson said that "the Menominee tribal membership roll has been closed since June 17, 1954, when legislation was passed to terminate the tribe's special relationship with the Federal Government. The restoration of this relationship by Public Law 93-197, passed December 22, 1973, requires the updating of the roll."

Following a 30-day review period, final regulations governing the enrollment process will be published. The Bureau will then contract with Menominee Restoration Committee, the interim governing body for the tribe, to conduct the enrollment in accordance with the regulations.

The new roll will include members of the tribe listed on the 1954 roll and still living on December 22, 1973 and descendants of 1954 enrollees, born after midnight of June 17 of that year, who possess at least on quarter degree Menominee Indian blood. These latter must file an application for enrollment in accordance with the procedures set forth in the published regulations.

The termination of the Menominees, finally effected in 1961, was a disaster for the tribe and its people. It meant the withdrawal of education, health, and welfare services provided by the Federal Government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It also ended the trust status of the reservation land and the lumber mill which was the tribe's main industry. In less than seven years after termination, the tribe, which had been one of the more economically successful, was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Under the Restoration Act, BIA and Indian Health Services programs are already being provided to the tribe and the Menominee-owned land will be restored to trust status. There are approximately 2,600 people residing on the former reservation land - now Menominee County in Northeast Wisconsin.

It is probable that the new Menominee roll, including those who have moved out of the county, will exceed the 1954 enrollment of 3,270.

The proposed enrollment regulations require adequate publicizing of all information pertaining to the enrollment process. Copies of the proposed regulations can be obtained from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Minneapolis Area Office, 831 Second Avenue, South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402.