Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Ayres 202-343-7445
For Immediate Release: August 16, 1974
Print PDF

Almost $1 million to be used to help Indian students in public schools has been awarded under contracts this month to Indian tribal groups in the Great Lakes Area, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson announced today. The contracts were let by the BLA's Minneapolis Area Office.

The Minnesota Chippewa Resource Development Corporation received the bulk of the money, $863,668, for the benefit of the six Chippewa Indian reservations in Minnesota - Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs and White Earth.

The Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board of Stone Lake, Wisconsin, received $51,318 for use in the Hayward and Winter school districts. The Keweenaw Bay Education Committee, Inc., of Baraga, Michigan received $43,729 for schools in the Baraga, L'Anse and Watersmeet districts. A contract for $23,662 was also awarded to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Education Committee, Inc. for the Mt. Pleasant School District in Michigan.

Under the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 the Bureau is authorized to provide assistance to public schools with substantial Indian enrollments. Commonly these funds are used for needed supplemental programs, not part of the ordinary school program. This might be a course in Indian culture, employment of an Indian teacher's aide to facilitate the beginning student's adjustments to school or a special program in reading. Local Indian committees are asked to determine the needs.

In special circumstances, where the school district contains large areas of Indian-owned, tax-exempt land, the funds can also be used for the basic operating costs of the schools.

"In years past," Commissioner Thompson said, "the use of these funds would have been determined by the Bureau, the State Department of Education and the school districts. Under these contracts the tribal groups, working directly with the school districts, will make that determination. This is one example of the way the Bureau is implementing the policy of Indian self-determination. "