Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Dollar volume of contracts with Indian tribes and individuals for goods and services -- excluding construction -- by the bureau of Indian Affairs has reached $29.5 million in fiscal year 1972, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton announced today.

Another $12 million in contracts for goods and services to Indian tribes and individuals is anticipated by the close of the current fiscal year.

The increase in direct contracting with Indian tribes and individuals by BIA since 1969 for goods and services is significant and is in line with President Nixon's determination to give Indian people greater participation in their affairs, “Secretary Morton said.

Contracts by BIA with Indian tribes and individuals for goods and services amounted to $4.4 million in fiscal year 1968, $7.7 million in fiscal '69, and $12.9. Million in fiscal f 70, and $28. 5 million in fiscal 71, Secretary Morton noted.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce said the new emphasis on contracting by Indians through the Bureau has become "an important means of training and employment for Indians.”

Commissioner Bruce -- an Indian of Sioux-Mohawk descent -- added that the BIA contracts help make Indian people producing Americans and meaningfully involve them. In matters of great concern to themselves and Indian communities.”

Contracting to Indians has largely taken place under what is known as the "Buy Indian Act. II This act, passed in 1910, says that "in the purchase of Indian supplies” the Secretary of the Interior may use his discretion and “ so far as may be practicable Indian labor shall be employed, and purchases of the products of Indian industry may be made in open market .... “

Contracts negotiated have involved goods and services primarily for Indian education, law and order functions, social services, plant management, roads maintenance and construction, and supplies. Contracts for social services functions averaged the highest dollar amounts -- $75,400, while contracts for supplies averaged $1,600.

The anticipated number of non- construction contracts to be signed between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian suppliers in fiscal year 1972 is 1, 749, compared to 1, 175 signed in fiscal year 1969.

Some of the Bureau of Indian Affairs service’, that have been contracted out to Indian companies or tribes to operate are: "'Housing developments, home ownership training functions, water resources inventories, ground water studies, adult education training functions. Purchase of actual supplies from Indians covers abroad spectrum.