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Acting Secretary of the Interior Fred J. Russell today announced that former South Dakota Congressman Ben Reifel, an American Indian, will serve without compensation as an assistant for Indian Affairs to the Director of the National Park Service.

Representative Reifel voluntarily retired at the close of the 91st congress after serving five consecutive terms.

Before his election to represent South Dakota First District, Reifel was for 22 years an administrator in the Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs. While there he served both as an agency superintend and as an area Director and earned the Department's highest employee recognition, its Distinguished Service Award.

Born of a Sioux mother and a German-American father at Parmelee, S. Dak., in 1906, Reifel received a Bachelor of Science degree at South Dakota State College in 1932. He attained a master's degree in 1950 and a doctorate in public administration in 1952, both from Harvard University. He was named Outstanding American Indian in 1956 and began his congressional career with the elections of 1960.

George B. Hartzog, Jr., director of' the National Park Service, said this in welcoming the Reifel appointment:

"Ben Reifel brings to us a wealth of experience and knowledge which will materially enhance our efforts to support and assist the Indian Tribes, many of whom are close neighbors of the national parks, in preserving and interpreting their natural and cultural heritage and enhancing the vast outdoor recreational opportunities available on their lands.

"With Mr. Reifel's commitment, imagination, and enthusiasm, I am confident that this most worthwhile program will achieve a new and sharpened dimension of public service."