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Forrest J. Gerard, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, today announced his resignation effective January 19, 1980, to re-enter private business.

Gerard, a Presidential appointee who has served since September 1977 as the Department's first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, said in a letter to President Carter: ''My decision to re-enter private business was not easily reached. In these difficult times, however, my responsibility to assist two of my daughters with their college education left me but a single choice."

"As I return to private life, I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to have served the public and the Indian people as the first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. I wish to commend your Administration for creating this important position to address the essential policy issues and direct the overall approach to the complex and intricate field of Indian Affairs.''

Secretary of the Interior Resignation but understood the has served with distinction as

Indian Affairs," he said. "As assignment he has proven himself an alert executive in handling Cecil D. Andrus said he greatly regretted Gerard's considerations which led to the decision. “Forrest has first Assistant Secretary of the Interior for expected when he was selected for this difficult to be a vigorous advocate of Indian causes and the administration of Indian issues."

Gerard was nominated by President Carter in July 1977 as the culmination of a selection process involving more than 40 persons who were recommended by tribal leaders and others. A member of the Blackfeet Tribe, Gerard was staff assistant for the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Affairs from 1971 through 1976. He was involved in the development of the Indian Self-Determination and Education

Assistance Act and other major legislation involving Indian affairs. He opened his own consulting office after leaving the Senate Subcommittee staff in December 1976.