Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today announced the assignment of Sidney M. Carney, a career employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to work with "the Seneca Indians of New York on problems resulting from construction of the Kinzua Dam and Reservoir on the Allegheny River.

The Kinzua project is part of a comprehensive plan for flood control in the Ohio River Basin originally authorized by Congress in 1938. It will be built by the Army Corps of Engineers and will require the taking of over 9,000 acres of Seneca land which can be done under the law only by action of Congress. Appropriations committees of both Senate and House heard voluminous testimony for and against the proposed project in connection with the appropriations bills for the fiscal years 1958, 1959, and 1960. Funds for the project were approved by Congress in all three years.

In 1959 the United States Supreme Court declined to hear litigation designed to halt the project and thus confirmed that the action of Congress on the appropriations bills was sufficient authorization for the taking of the Seneca lands.

Following a careful review of the entire matter last year, the Administration decided that construction of the project should proceed. At that time President Kennedy directed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to provide the Senecas with assistance in meeting the problems engendered by the project. Indian Bureau help on these matters was subsequently requested by the Senecas and the Army Corps of Engineers.

As the Bureau's representative in the project area, Carney will be concerned with (1) exploring the possibilities of acquiring lands which could be exchanged for the area to be flooded, (2) reviewing the ways in which the Senecas could share in the benefits resulting from the recreation potential of the reservoir, (3) conducting investigations which will lead to a determination of the special damages to be sustained by the Senecas because a substantial proportion of their land is being taken, and (4) providing special counseling and guidance to Senecas who are required to move from their homes.

Carney, who is of Choctaw and Creek Indian descent, will be the first Indian Bureau employee stationed in New York State since 1949. He will establish headquarters at Salamanca in the near future.

Born at Quinton, Oklahoma, in 1920, Carney joined the Bureau in 1957 as administrative officer at the Fort Defiance Subagency on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. One year later he was promoted to a more responsible post of the same kind at the Jicarilla Agency, Dulce, N. Mex. Since last June he has been serving at the national headquarters of the Bureau in Washington, D. C.

He is a graduate of Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas, and holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree from Eastern Oklahoma State University. Before joining Federal service, he worked for this University first as purchasing agent and later on the faculty as head of the accounting department. He also served for about a year as office manager of the Kiamichi Electric Cooperative, Wilburton, Okla.