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Media Contact: Tozier - Interior 4306
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James F. Canan, career employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, will take over as new area director for the Bureau at Billings, Montana, June 24, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Canan has been assistant area director in charge of resources at Gallup, New Mexico, since last December. At Billings he succeeds Percy E. Melis who retired last March.

A native of Altoona, Pa., and graduate of Haverford College, Canan joined the Department of the Interior in 1949 as a confidential assistant in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Water and Power. In 1950, he transferred to the Washington office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and served there for four years as a business economist. In 1954, he moved to the area office at Gallup as an administrative assistant and two years later was appointed superintendent of the Consolidated Ute Agency, Ignacio, Colo. After four years in this post, he moved back to the Gallup office as assistant area director six months ago.

In addition to acquiring a bachelor's degree at Haverford, Canan also attended Swarthmore College and Villanova College under the Navy V-12 program during World War II. He is married and has three children. At Billings he will have charge of all Indian Bureau operations in Montana and Wyoming.