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It is indeed an honor TO represent the Secretary of the Interior at this 30th Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians.

I am also pleased to have the privilege of representing your Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Secretary Morton has requested me to convey his best wishes for the continued success of NCAI and extend his personal regards to Mr. Leon Cook, Mr. Charles E. Trimble, along with other officers and directors for the excellent work done in the past year.

It has been traditional during, the NCAI Convention to use this portion of the program to tell the Indian Community about the new goals and ambitions of Government --and how that new thrust will better serve his needs. This I will not do such rhetoric without performance is outmoded and totally unacceptable. Rather, I choose to define the resources and say to you, "How shall we use them jointly to better the individual lives of ~ American Indian?"

Note I have used the word "resources," and not without reason. The Bureau of Indian Affairs your resource --only have the exclusive right to use it. No other class of citizenship has an agency in Government that protects its property, educates its children, provides a variety of unique services and benefits, and serves as an advocate for both the individual and the collective body of individuals.

Needless to say, there are many, who by design or unwittingly, believe the Indian is not entitled to such preferred treatment. It does not take a master-mind to interpret the effects of ill-designed legislation -- such as House Concurrent Resolution 108 which not only resulted in the termination of the Menominee's a decade ago, but to this day remains on the books as expressing the sense of the Congress as favoring the termination of the special relationship of Indians to the Federal Government. Nor does it take a master-mind to recognize the insidious encroachment upon the property and individual Indian rights in the many Federal Court cases each year. And no one need to be reminded of the abundant conflict of interest situations that arise in the complexity of bureaus and departments in our Executive Branch of Government.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the urgent need for to protect resource --and here are a few reasons why:

The general public does not have the slightest concept of the real functions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Take for instance the matter of those who are served. How many in these United States really understand that the Bureau is restricted to serving only those Indian tribes that have a special relationship with the Federal Government.? And this is by statute! Thus, only about one-half the total Indian population--of the United States is eligible for BIA services.

How many in the general public know that the Bureau of Indian Affairs does not provide the health care, hospitalization and medical needs of the American Indian? That this is a function of Health, Education, and Welfare Department.

Who in the general public can recognize the difference in responsibility of the many Government agencies that also share in the delivery of services to the Indian Tribes -- Department of Commerce, through its Economic Development Administration, that has had its share of success and failure on Indian reservations --Office of Economic Opportunity with its multiplicity of social programs --Housing and Urban Development with its faltering commitments for Indian housing?

Nor is it strange to us to find those that discover for the first time that the BIA is not the "lawyer" for the Indian people --that the Justice Department has that exclusive jurisdiction and the decision to litigate for the protection of Indian rights rests primarily in their hands.

And I doubt seriously that any of us could clearly define the parallel or overlapping roles of Health, Education, and Welfare in the "Title Programs" as they relate to Indian education.

I mention these things with a sense of urgency --urgency because this failure to understand on the part of the general public is placing your resource in jeopardy.

If you studied as many editorials, read as many articles, and answered as much Congressional correspondence as I do, you would be equally concerned. I welcome the inquiries of the Indian constituency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, no matter what channel of communications is used, because their questions arise from a knowledgeable experience. But I must say with all sincerity that the general public equates the Bureau of Indian Affairs as that all embracing arm of Government and heaps its wrath upon that agency for all commissions or omissions, real or imagined, that relate to the Indian. This is damaging to your resource.

Only the Congress can extend services to the non-federally recognized tribes, or to those vast numbers of American Indian citizens who were never associated with an organized tribe. The urban Indian, in many cases unjustly separated from the base of services, is in dire need of Federal attention --much more than the casual courtesy services permitted by statute to the BIA. What are some of those resources that ~ need to be protecting? As complex as they are, the major categories are:

1. The capability of protecting the property and rights of Indian individuals and tribes delineated as "trust responsibilities" as defined in the treaties and statutes, and broadly interpreted by use.

2. The capability of providing education to the Indian youth and Indian adult.

3. The delivery of those Indian services included in such broad categories as the development of tribal government, welfare, community services and general tribal operations.

4. The development of reservation resources, both natural and human, creating economic betterment, job opportunities and skill development.

5. The constant surveillance of legislation that affects individuals, tribes and Indian rights, services, and resources. These services are the real mission of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And in addition, this resource has a host of technicians that are unequalled in this country for their expertise and dedication to assist Indians. Bill Veeder, for example, is a renowned architect in the planning and adjudication of Indian water rights. We are indeed fortunate to have this type of capability --but what a pity his competence as a lawyer cannot be used in the courtroom except in an advisory capacity when the adjudication actually takes place, merely because that is not a function of the BIA.

Procrastination in the Federal Government in matters pertaining to the American Indian is not an exclusive trademark of the Executive Branch. The Congress has had important legislative proposals before it for consideration for the past three years that would permit the Indian Community to achieve the goals it sets for itself.

The Indian Trust Counsel Authority would, for example, provide independent legal counsel and representation on behalf of Indians and Alaska Natives in the assertion of their natural resource rights. Such an authority is needed to remedy a conflict of interest on the part of the Federal Government.

The Authority would be under the direction of a three-man Board of Directors, two of whom must be Indians.

Amending the Johnson-O'Malley Act to authorize the Department of the Interior to channel funds appropriated under the Act directly to Indian tribes and communities. This amendment will add new authority to contract directly with Indian tribes, bands, groups, or communities who run their own educational institutions, enabling the Secretary to arrange for direct Indian involvement in Indian education, agricultural assistance, and social welfare.

A proposal to afford Indians greater control over activities conducted on their reservations concerning the areas of livestock trespass traders.

Enacted, this would place with tribal governments the ultimate decision as to whether Federal law, or their own trading ordinances, would be the regulating authority on the reservations.

A Bill providing for the assumption of the control and operation by Indian tribes and communities of certain programs and services provided for them by the Federal Government.

This proposal would enable any Indian tribe, band, group or community to request and assume control of any program or service now extended to it by the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior or the Indian Health Service program of the Public Health Service of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

As companion legislation, we propose that Civil Service employees be allowed transfer with the program or service and retain the coverage that they now enjoy as civil servants.

The Indian Financing Act that would improve the revolving loan fund and authorize loan guarantees to commercial banks for Indian projects.

I would most sincerely suggest that the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Affairs address itself to the pressing " problem of "equal treatment" for all our American Indian citizens by recommending legislation to extend Federal Services to those Indian tribes not now served by Government, and particularly to those urban Indians who are in need of health and housing services.

The proposal of this committee to establish a commission to study Indian needs and services available is laudable and should be enacted quickly. This is the kind of positive approach Indians need from this committee and I urge your support of the proposal.

I have always achieved success by setting goals and making every effort a move toward reaching such goals. When I came to the Interior I announced four objectives:

A constitutional amendment to prevent the termination of services to a federally recognized tribe by that unilateral action of-any branch of Government.

A better financial posture for Indians by an improved budget process, revenue financing and an Indian banking system.

A massive Indian Reservation Renewal program that would provide $2.5 billion over a ten-year period to improve reservations, eliminate unemployment and create a gross national product for reservations by developing the need for, and capability in the delivery of consumer goods and services at the reservation level.

--A revision of all the laws, rules, regulations, codes and manuals that affect the delivery of services and protection of rights and resources.

It is with a great degree of pride that I can say that Senator Abourezk has agreed to introduce a bill in the Senate addressing the subject of a constitutional amendment. Senator Domenici has introduced legislation to create a commission to review and revise laws pertaining to Indians. There will be an improved budget that will reflect the priorities established by the Indian tribes; package funding to specific tribes on a pilot basis, which would give tribes more control of the priority of the use of BIA funds on their reservation and which would be keyed into other sources of revenue; revenue financing is now being used in isolated cases; and the American Indian National Bank will be opened on November 15. It is my sincere hope that model legislation being drafted for ~n Indian Reservation Renewal Act will be received favorably.

Let us use our organizations to achieve goals.

Let us use our individual talents to develop skills.

Let us be tolerant and hear the other out.

--And above all --let us respect our elders and be active in the teaching and guidance of our youth. Only then will we have the necessary elements to preserve the rich heritage and culture this country --and, in fact, this world needs for its future security.