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Ken Smith, a Wasco Indian from Oregon nominated by President Reagan to be the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, told members of the Senate Select Indian Affairs Committee his ''beliefs and philosophy" on Indian matters at a confirmation hearing April 28.

With tribal council members from Smith's Warm Springs Reservation in full regalia in the hearing room, Smith expressed his belief "in the strengths of Indian people which have enabled them to endure and survive as a people through adversities and oppressions unparalleled in history."

Smith said that Indian people have the will and the ability to govern themselves 1.nd that tribal governments, not the Federal Government, have the "prime responsibility for improvement of their social and economic growth and development." He added that U.S. /Indian relationships will be "stronger and more meaningful when Indian tribal governments are strong and stable and less dependent on Federal funds for operation of their governmental programs."

Smith's role in helping the Confederated Warm Springs Tribes to achieve strength and stability and to reduce dependence on Federal aid was noted by the other witnesses at the hearing.

Senator Mark Hatfield said: "As general manager (of the Confederated Tribes) for the past 10 years, Mr. Smith has utilized his managerial and organizational skills to make the reservation a model of economic success with more than 1,000 persons employed and an annual payroll of more than $10 million."

Silas Whitman, a tribal council member from the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, said that Warm Springs has been a model for the Northwest tribes "as we prepare to go on a path of independence and self-determination." He said that Smith has provided invaluable aid to neighboring tribes, especially helping the Nez Perce in the area of timber development.

Frank Lawrence, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, North Dakota, spoke for the National Congress of American Indians and the 16 tribes of the Aberdeen, South Dakota Area. He said, 'We like his background. He is especially strong in economic development. This is greatly needed."