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Further reduction of Federal responsibilities in Indian affairs and a sharper focusing of attention on major Indian problems were the two basic developments for the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1954. According to the annual report of Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay released today.

One of the first major developments contributing to a reduction of Federal responsibilities was the passage of Public Law 280 bringing Indian lands in California, Minnesota (except the Red Lake Reservation), Nebraska, Oregon (except the Warm Springs Reservation), and Wisconsin (except the Menominee Reservation) under the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the five States mentioned, thus largely relieving the Bureau of further law enforcement duties in the affected areas.

Under a congressional mandate, recommendations were transmitted to Congress for termination of Federal supervision over ten groups, bands or tribes of Indians. Although hearings were held on all but one of these bills the only one enacted during the fiscal year was the Menominee legislation, under the provisions of which the tribe was given until December 31, 1958 to prepare for termination of trusteeship and special services and to develop tribal plans and programs.

Other termination bills which were well advanced in the legislative process at the close of the fiscal year were those covering the Klamaths and the Coastal Indians of Oregon, small bands of Utah Indians, the Uintah-Ouray group, and the Alabama Coushatta tribes of Texas. All of these bills were subsequently enacted.

Two other important bills which would transfer all of the Bureau’s health activities and responsibilities to the United States Public Health Service and its entire agricultural extension program to the Department of Agriculture were introduced. Although neither was enacted during the fiscal year, the bill transferring health services was passed by the House and both bills were under active congressional consideration as the period ended. The health transfer legislation was subsequently enacted but the extension bill failed to pass.

Following a tour of major Indian areas by Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons primary attention was given to three outstanding problems: (1) accommodation of all Indian children of school age at the earliest possible date, (2) provision of better health protection or preventive medicine service in Indian homes and communities, and (3) creation of greater opportunities for Indian economic advancement.

To reduce the number of children out of school on the Navajo Reservation the Navajo Emergency Education Program was formulated with a goal of providing accommodations in 1954 for 7,000 more children than the 14,000 previously enrolled. The plans involved enlarging existing schools on and off the reservation, the building of new schools, the placing of children in public schools in large towns on the fringe of the reservation, the building of dormitories to house children, plus the institution of trailer schools in the more isolated communities. By the end of June all phases of the program were moving forward at an encouraging pace, with good prospects of achievement of the goals during fiscal 1955.

In the direction of better health protection impetus was given to the initiation and enlargement of more intensive preventive medicine activities~ Sanitary engineers were added to the staff at six of the ten area offices and 18 young Indians were trained as sanitarian aides. During the year the new 400-bed medical center at Anchorage, Alaska was opened, operations were suspended, however, at Wind River, Wyoming, and Warm Springs, Oregon. By the end of the year 58 hospitals were in operation with a total authorized bed capacity of 2,840.

On the economic front three prominent citizens interested in Indian affairs-- Lawrence F. Lee, former president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, David T. Beals, president of the Interstate National Bank of Kansas City, Mo., and Dr. Clyde Kluckhohn of Harvard University--were persuaded to take the lead in organizing a nonprofit corporation to be concerned with economic surveys. These surveys, to be privately financed and conducted by research engineering organizations under contract, will provide tl1e basis for increased economic development and greater Indian employment opportunities in and around several of the major reservation areas.

During the year 2,165 Indians were directly assisted to relocate under the Bureau's relocation program. This included 1,649 persons in over 400 family groups, and 514 unattached men and women. In addition over 300 left without assistance to join family and friends.

Bureau responsibilities for management of Indian trust lands were reduced as a result of the issuance of 1,682 patents in fee, certificates of competency and removal of restrictions, more than twice as many as in the previous year. More than 3,200 tracts of Indian allotted land were removed from trust or restricted status, comprising a total of 54,000 acres. Income to the Indians from mineral leases, principally oil and gas, reached an all time high of over $34,000,000, about 36 percent more than the previous year's figure. Of the 667 miles of reservation roads graded or surfaced during the year, 487 miles were transferred to county highway departments for maintenance.