Media Contact: Information Service
For Immediate Release: August 10, 1954
Print PDF

Distribution of tribal funds to individual members of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin under Public Law 399, approved June 17, is going forward smoothly and satisfactorily, Acting Secretary of the Interior Ralph A. Tudor announced today.

The enactment which establishes a program for terminating Federal supervision over Menominee affairs before the end of 1958, also provides for an immediate payment of $1,500 to each tribal member from Menominee funds on deposit in the United states Treasury.

A late report from Raymond H. Bitney, superintendent of the Menominee Agency at Neopit, indicates that about 65 percent of the 1,597 checks intended for adult members of the tribe have now been distributed. The total amount made available to the Indians is nearly $1,500,000.

Substantial amounts of this money are being used for bank deposits and for the payment of commercial obligations, according to a quick check with major banking and business firms in the nearby community of Shawano. One Shawano bank reported $113,000 of new deposits since the start of the tribal payments. Another estimated $110,000 in new savings accounts, $25,000 deposited in checking accounts, and sales of cashier’s and travelers’ checks in the amount of about $7,000.

One of the local finance companies reported total collections of $21,572 including about $4,000 on accounts previously considered uncollectible. Similar reports, involving somewhat smaller amounts, were received from another finance company, a furniture store, and a general merchandise establishment.

The general impression reported by observers is that, although this distribution of tribal funds is much larger than any previously made at Menominee, the Indians are taking it in stride and with little or no evidence of community disturbance or disruption.