Media Contact: Information Service
For Immediate Release: January 21, 1954
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Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay today said the Department has submitted for congressional consideration a series of bills providing for orderly termination of Federal administration of Indian Affairs in eight tribal jurisdictions.

The bills, prepared in compliance with House Concurrent Resolution No. 108 adopted at the last session, affect all Indians in California, Florida, and New York, also the Flatheads of Montana, the Klamath and Grand Ronde-Siletz groups of Oregon, the Turtle Mountain Chippewas of North Dakota, and four tribes under jurisdiction of the Indian Bureau's Potawatomi Area field Office at Horton, Kansas. Two other groups designated in the Concurrent Resolution, the Menominees of Wisconsin and the Alabama-Coushattas of Texas, are covered by bills now pending from the preceding congressional session. The termination bills now before Congress cover more than 66,000 Indians in ten States, roughly one-seventh of the Indian population of the country as estimated by the Indian Bureau.

While the bills vary greatly in detail, they all provide for eventual termination of Federal trusteeship over Indian property, and would make the Indians subject to the some Federal and State laws as other citizens. Federal responsibilities for special services to these Indians, such as roads, health and education, would also be terminated. Ample time is allowed, however, for the completion of arrangements under which the Indians would receive customary services from State and local agencies on the same basis as other citizens.

The bills were developed in consultation with the tribal groups affected and many contain provisions suggested by the groups or by individual tribal members. All contain provisions designed to protect the interests of minors, incompetents and other individual Indians who will need such protection after termination of Federal trusteeship.

Whenever tribal property is involved, the bills provide the Indians with a range of choices concerning its management or disposition. One alternative is transfer of unrestricted title to a corporation or other legal entity organized by the Indians under State law. Another is liquidation of the property and distribution of the proceeds among enrolled tribal members. A third is transfer of the property to a private management trustee, chosen by the tribes. If the tribe fails to decide on one of these alternatives within the specified time limit, each of the bills authorizes the Secretary to turn the property over to a private trustee for liquidation and distribution of the proceeds., One exception to this pattern is the bill involving, the Alabama-Coushatta Indians of Texas which provides for transfer of the tribal property to the State of Texas to be held in trust for the tribe.

The bills also provide, that the Secretary will help individual Indians owning an undivided interest in trust land to partition or sell the land - a service the Indians would otherwise have to pay the courts to perform.

Distinctive features of the individual bills are summarized as follows:

The California bill, affecting an estimated 31,000 Indians of the State, provides for termination of

Federal responsibilities within five years of the date of enactment. It also provides tax exemption for a limited time on land owned by minors and lifetime tax exemptions on the lands of elderly Indians. Other provisions restrict the alienation of land owned by elderly Indians without the consent of a State agency to be designated by the Governor and authorize the transfer of any irrigation facilities on Indian lands either to an irrigation district or to the landowners who use the facilities.

The western Oregon bill, covering approximately 2,000 Indians formerly under jurisdiction of the Indian Bureau's Grand Ronde-Siletz Agency, provides for termination within two years. It follows the general pattern outlined above and has no especially important distinctive features.

The Klamath bill involves roughly 2,000 Indians and provides for a three-year termination date. It makes Indian lands within the irrigation projects assessable for construction and operation costs and authorizes the Secretary to transfer operation and maintenance responsibilities for these works to an irrigation district by agreement. Pending the completion of such an agreement, Federal operation of the irrigation facilities would continue.

The Flathead bill affects about 4,200 members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and provides for a three-year termination. It makes Indian lands within the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project assessable for construction and operation and maintenance costs, and authorizes the Secretary to cancel operation and maintenance assessments that he deems to be inequitable. Additional legislation will be required to transfer operation and maintenance responsibilities on the irrigation project from the Federal Government to a local organization.

The Kansas bill covers approximately 2,400 Indians in four tribal groups – the Potawatomi and Kickapoo groups located in Kansas and the Sac and Fox and Iowa groups located partly in Kansas and partly in Nebraska. It has a two-year termination period and provides that any tribal member occupying land under an assignment from the tribe may have the privilege of buying it. It also stipulates that any land occupied by an Indian as a home site may be sold only subject to lifetime use of the site by the occupant.

The Turtle Mountain bill, involving about 8,900 Indians, is centered around a proposed program to assist the tribal members in finding employment and resettling away from the reservation. It provides for termination of the Federal trusteeship in five years out permits continuation of Federal services until the relocation program is completed.

The Florida bill affects approximately 870 Seminoles and provides for a three-year termination. It HJ.so conveys to the tribe the equitable title to sub marginal lands acquired by the Federal Government during the depression years and assigned to the tribe for use by executive order. These lands would be managed or disposed of as prescribed in the other bills.

The legislation for New York State has no specified time limit and involves more than 11 000 Indians of the Iroquois Confederation of the Six Nations including about 3,600 members of the Oneida Tribe residing in Wisconsin. These Indians have no land in Federal trusteeship and are not receiving any Federal services in such fields as health or education. The principal obligations of the Federal Government are to distribute among the Six Nations a perpetual annuity of $4,500 (partially distributed in the form of cloth) established by a treaty of 1794 and to distribute among the Seneca Indians an annuity of $6,000 established by a statute of 1831.

At the request of the Indians, the legislation was divided into two separate bills. One provides for

capitalization of the $4,500 treaty annuity at three percent interest, a total of $150,000 and for payment of proper shares of this fund to each of the Six Nations. Such payment would be made, however, only with the consent of' the tribe concerned. This bill also makes inapplicable to the Indians in New York all laws of the United States, with a few exceptions, that apply uniquely to Indians and not to other citizens. The exceptions relate to special Federal statutes defining criminal and civil jurisdiction of the State over Indians and their property, regulating the leasing of Indian lands, and making State fish and game laws applicable to some of the reservations. The second New York bill provides for capitalization of the $6,000 statutory annuity at 3 percent, a total of $200,000, and for distribution of the capitalized fund, together with some miscellaneous accounts in the United States Treasury, among the Seneca Indians.

The Texas bill is H. R. 6282 which was introduced in the 1953 session of Congress. It affects about 420 members of the associated Alabama and Coushatta Tribes and has no specified time limit. In addition to transferring the tribal land to the State of Texas, it also cancels a tribal debt to the United States of approximately $39,000 which could be collected only by selling the tribal land.

The Menominee bill is H. R. 2828 now pending from the preceding congressional session. It affects approximately 3,000 Indians and provides for termination of Federal responsibilities by December 31, 1956. In the meantime the tribe would be authorized by the bill to employ specialists to plan for future management or disposition of the tribal assets. The bill also provides for immediate payment of $1,500 to each tribal member from tribal funds on deposit in the United States Treasury.