



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior has submitted to Congress a report recommending against enactment of S. 401, a bill that would require forced sale of all Indian tribal lands and complete liquidation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in three years, Secretary Douglas McKay said today. "

Commenting on the departmental report, which was prepared under his supervision, Indian Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons expressed particular opposition to the requirement for mass liquidation of tribal land holdings in Federal trusteeship.

"In some cases such as among the Pueblos of New Mexico," he stated, "this proposed legislation would sweep away tribal ownership of lands which the Indian people have occupied and used productively for countless centuries. Many other similar examples could be cited but this one should be enough to indicate the drastic character of the bill. I firmly believe that its enactment would be not only a tragic error but a flat repudiation of the most basic principles of fair and honorable dealing with the Indian people. I am opposed to it completely and utterly."

In place of the wholesale liquidation embodied in S. 401, the Department recommends a continuation of the Administration's policy of full consultation with the Indians, constructive action to alleviate their outstanding health, education and economic problems, and a gradual readjustment of their special relations with the Federal Government.

In essence, the readjustment approach which the Department is now following is a selective one based on careful evaluation of each tribe's potentialities and limitations, its preparedness and readiness to assume full responsibilities for management of its own affairs.

<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/department-recommends-against-bill-liquidate-all-indian-tribal-lands>