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Plans for further insuring the secrecy of absentee ballots in Osage Indian Tribal Council elections, and representation proportionate to each voter's financial interest in the Osage mineral estate, were announced today by the Department of the Interior.

In a letter to the chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the Department said it has submitted a notice of the proposed changes for publication in the Federal Register.

The Department said the proposals resulted from hearings by the Bureau of Indian Affairs at the Osage Agency headquarters in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, last September.

"The great majority of Osage people who expressed themselves have indicated that they favor a change in the election procedures to further insure secret ballots," the letter said.

Heretofore, absentee Osage voters have been permitted to cast their ballots through other voters who were not necessarily election officials. The new regulation would require that executed absentee ballots be sent by the absent voters directly to the supervisor of the election board.

Under the present election rules, all Osage Indians with an interest in the Osage estate are permitted to vote. Each vote is equal, irrespective of the voter's percentage of interest in the estate. Under the proposed regulations, the Department said, "voting will be in proportion to each person's interest in the Osage estate."

The headright interest that a member of the Osage Tribe has is shown on the Osage annuity roll. Under the revised rules proportionate voting would be accomplished by assigning to each ballot exactly the same value as the voter's headright interest shown on the annuity roll.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs said the change would result in a more businesslike administration of the Osage estate by giving the Osage Indian "stockholders" a voice in elections in proportion to their respective interests.

The Department said all interested persons are invited to submit in writing their views, data and arguments on the proposals, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C., within 30 days of the date of publication of the notice in the Federal Register.