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Justifiable pride in the many historic accomplishments of Oklahoma Cherokee Indians must not be permitted to divert attention from the problems of present-day Cherokees struggling to make a livelihood on unproductive lands, Philleo Nash, Commissioner-designate of the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior said today.

In a talk at the annual celebration of the Cherokee National Holiday at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the former Wisconsin lieutenant governor nominated by president Kennedy as Commissioner of Indian Affairs paid tribute to outstanding Cherokees, past and present. Along with this he also pledged a more effective concentration of Indian Bureau resources in Indian areas where the human needs are greatest.

“The history of your Nation,” Nash told his predominantly Cherokee audience, “is a bright record of industry and achievement. It is marked by the scholarship and wisdom of the great Sequoyah; the political sagacity of men like Ridge, Boudinot, Watie, Bushyhead, Rogers, Owen, Hastings, and Carter; and the leadership you are getting today from personalities such as Justice N.B. Johnson (of the Oklahoma Supreme Court) and your Principal Chief, W.W. Keeler, with whom I recently had the pleasure and privilege of serving for several months on Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall’s Task force on Indian Affairs.”