Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: August 1, 1961
Print PDF

President Kennedy today nominated Philleo Nash, former lieutenant governor of Wisconsin, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and simultaneously, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced appointment of John O. Crow, Cherokee Indian and 28-year veteran of the Indian Bureau, as Deputy Commissioner.

For the past six months Nash has been a member of the Indian Affairs Task Force, named by Secretary Udall, and has been a special assistant to Assistant Secretary John A. Carver, Jr., and Crow has been Acting Commissioner of the Bureau.

Secretary Udall said Nash's "exceptionally fine work on the Task Force confirmed the high opinion we had of his qualifications." He pointed out that W. W. Keeler, chairman of the Task Force, had recommended Nash's appointment.

Secretary Udall praised Crow for his "outstanding service as Acting Commissioner, where his long experience and keen insight into the problems we face have made a major contribution."

"We are extremely well pleased," the Secretary said, "that Mr. Crow's counsel and leadership will continue to be available to us."

Nash, 51, has had a career in government service, private business and higher education.

In addition to serving as lieutenant governor of Wisconsin from 1959 to 1961, he was a special assistant and administrative assistant to President Truman, specializing in Department of the Interior matters, from 1946 to 1953. For four years prior to the White House assignment he was a special assistant to the Director of the Office of War Information, the late Elmer Davis.

As a student and lecturer in anthropology, Nash has had an active interest in Indian affairs throughout his adult life. For the past five months he has been a member of Secretary Udall's Task Force on Indian Affairs which completed its study and submitted its report on July 12.

Born at Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., in 1909, Nash graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1932 and received a Ph. D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago five years later. From 1937 to 1941 he was a lecturer on anthropology at the University of Toronto.

In the private business field he has been president of the Biron Cranberry Company at Wisconsin Rapids since 1946 and is currently president of the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association.

He is a member of Sigma Xi (the honorary science society), the American Anthropological Association, the Society of Applied Anthropology, and the Cosmos Club of Washington.

He married the former Edith Rosenfels in 1935 and they have two daughters.

A native of Salem, Mo., Crow grew up in Commerce, Okla., and is currently a resident of Alexandria, Va.

He first joined the Bureau as a clerical worker at the Fort Totten Agency in North Dakota in 1933. Two years later he moved to the Truxton Canyon Agency, Valentine, Ariz. In the years that followed he took on increasing responsibilities at Truxton Canyon and was appointed superintendent of the agency in 1942.

After four years in this post he served as superintendent of three other Indian agencies over the following 11 years. From 1946 to 1951 he was at Mescalero Agency, Mescalero, N. Mex.; from 1951 to 1955 at the Fort Apache Agency, Whiteriver, Ariz.; and from 1955 to 1957 at the Uintah-Ouray Agency, Fort Duchesne, Utah. In June 1957 he was named assistant to E. J. Utz, the Bureau's Assistant Commissioner for Resources, and remained in that post until his appointment as chief of the Bureau's realty branch in July 1960. He was named Acting Commissioner last February and was the first man of Indian descent to have that responsibility in 90 years.

He was an outstanding football player as a student at the Haskell Indian Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and later played professional football with the Boston Redskins.