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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today the appointment by President Kennedy of John O. Crow, a Cherokee Indian and 28-year veteran employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as Acting Commissioner of the Bureau and a member of a newly constituted expert group, charged with recommending plans for reorganizing the Bureau, and development of improved policies and programs.

A native of Salem, Mo. and currently a resident of Alexandria, Va., Crow is the first person of American Indian descent to have the responsibility as Commissioner of Indian Affairs since 1871 when Ely S. Parker, a Civil War general and New York State Indian, left office in the Grant Administration.

Crow has been chief of the branch of realty in the Washington office of the Indian Bureau since July 1960. 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 tock 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 realty branch last July.

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.

The group which will recommend plans for reorganizing the bureau will be headed by W. W. Keeler, 53, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, an oil company executive and longtime principal chief of the Cherokee Nation.

Mr. Keeler is a member of the Commission on Rights, Liberties and Responsibilities of the American Indian, created by the Fund for the Republic. He was born in Dalhart, Texas, in 1908. After he attended Kansas University, he started work in 1929 with the Phillips Company as a chemist, and rose through successive responsibilities to become Executive Vice-President in 1956. He is an officer of numerous subsidiaries of Phillips Company and of several petroleum trade associations. He is a regional adviser to the Institute of International Education and is a Trustee of the Dwight Presbyterian Mission. Married in 1933, he has three sons.

Other members of the group will be:

Philleo Nash, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin. Born Wisconsin Rapids, 1909. Graduated from University of Wisconsin (A.B., 1932) and University of Chicago (Ph.D., 1937). Lecturer on Anthropology, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1937-41; Special Assistant, Office of

War Information, 1942-46; Special Assistant, the White House and Administrative Assistant to the President, 1946-53. President, Biron Cranberry Company, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. Married Edith Rosenfels in 1935; two daughters. Member, Board of Directors, Association on American Indian Affairs, 1942 to present. Secretary, Yale-Toronto International Conference on Indian Welfare, 1939.

James E. Officer, Tucson, Arizona. Born Boulder, Colorado, July 28, 1924. Attended Universities of Kansas and Arizona. (A.B. Anthropology, Arizona, 1950; Ph.D. candidate, Anthropology, Arizona, 1961) Newscaster and writer, radio stations in Kansas City, Phoenix, and Tucson, 1942-50; U. S. Department of State, Washington, D. C., and Santiago, Chile, U. S. Information Officer, 1950-53; University of Arizona, Instructor in Sociology and Anthropology, 1954-60. Concurrently (1955-56), Assistant Director, Bureau of Ethnic Research, Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. U. S. Army, 1945, 1946 (Sergeant-Major, Classification and Assignment, U. S. Ordnance Depot, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland).

Author of numerous publications in professional journals and Indians in School, II University of Arizona Press, 1956. Member, Phi Beta Kappa, 'Sigma Xi (Honorary Science Society), American Anthropological Association, American Sociological Society, and Tucson Arizona Press Club. Married Roberta Mitzel, Kansas City, February 22, 1946; one son, one daughter.

William Zimmerman, Jr., lives in Arlington, Virginia, and is the Washington Representative of Trustees for Conservation. Now retired, he is a longtime Interior Department career officer, who came into the Government in 1933 with Harold Ickes. In June of 1933 he became Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and he continued in that post until June of 1950, when he transferred to the Bureau of Land Management, first as Assistant and then as Associate Director. He continued in the Department until his retirement in 1954.

At that time he became Field Director of the Association on American Indian Affairs, where he remained until 1957, when he entered into a consulting relationship with a number of conservation groups. At the present time he is a Trustee of the Robert Marshall Wilderness Fund, a member of the Citizens Committee on National ReS01ITCeS; a member of the Council and a Vice-President of the Wilderness Society, and a Consultant to the National Congress of American Indians. Mr. Zimmerman was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1890, graduated from Harvard in 1910 (A.B.), and resides in Arlington with his wife, the former Eleanor Williams, and two children.

The text of Secretary Udall's letter to Mr. Keeler about the work of the group is attached.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of the Secretary Washington 25, D. C.

February 8, 1961

Dear Mr. Keeler:

I am writing to invite you to be the head of a group in the Department of the Interior which will look into the organization and programs of the entire Department, insofar as they bear on the Department's mission and responsibilities with respect to Indian Affairs.

Others who will be associated with you in this project will be Mr. John O. Crow, whom I am designating

Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Mr. Philleo Nash, formerly Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, Mr. James Officer of the University of Arizona, and Mr. William Zimmerman, Jr., formerly Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

For the next ninety days, the assignment of your group will be to advise me from day to day as to how we can be more effective in the discharge of our present statutory duties. I have particularly in mind President Kennedy's objective, stated in a letter to Mr. Clarence Wesley, President of the National Congress of American Indians: "During the recent campaign I have expressed my concern over the conditions of poverty and disease which afflict so many American Indians and have made clear that I am intent on doing something about the matter. I want to repeat, therefore, that I am pledged to a program for the development of the human and natural resources of the Indian reservations. Such a program will indeed be an integral part of the total program of my Administration."

It is understood that you are coming into the. Department as a consultant without compensation. I wish to express my personal appreciation to you and to your company for your willingness to make this important contribution to a better life for American Indians and thus to a stronger America.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Stewart L. Udall
Secretary of the Interior

Mr. W. W. Keeler
Bartlesville, Oklahoma