

# **Native Embassy Formed**

## ***Indians Take BIA Building in D.C.***

AIPA — (John Tiger has been covering the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office in Washington D.C. by a group of Native Americans called the the Trail of the Broken Treaties Caravan.

He phoned Tundra Times with the following account 11 P.M. our time, about 2 or 3 A.M. EST. Minutes before, he telephoned, he was inside the building and had talked with Indian leaders there.)

There are approximately 500 Indians with the Trail of the Broken Treaties Caravan who have remained inside the BIA building since last Thursday afternoon, approximately 5 P.M. EST.

The Indians have remained in the building and have attended meetings with Department of the Interior and BIA officials until about two nights ago, (Saturday), when negotiations

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were dropped on a 20 point position paper and seven demands that were prepared by the Indians.

They asked to meet with President Nixon or a suitable body of higher-ups in the governmental hierarchy who would have the authority to act on the problems. Among the demands being made is the demand for the resignation of Rogers C. B. Morton, Secretary of the Interior; Harrison Loesch, Assistant Sec. of the Interior; Robert Robertson, executive director of the National Council on Indian Opportunity; and John Crow, Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

They asked that Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis Bruce be given back his authority until such executive and legislative action is implemented on their 20 point position paper.

Commissioner Bruce was in the BIA office while the takeover was in process or at least there at a later time. He appeared before the Indians and said he was with them and would remain in his office to help further their cause.

One afternoon, he was called out for a meeting, presumably with Sec. Morton. He walked out and never came back. It is believed that he was ordered by Morton not to return to BIA offices while the Indians were occupying it.

Their statement said: "We demand proper housing during our stay in Washington, D.C. We demand that commitments made to Indian people over the Johnson-O'Malley issue in Oklahoma be honored and WRITTEN to the people.

We demand that urban and landless Indians be given proper services entitled to them the same as treaty Indians. And we demand that all bones and artifacts of our ancestors be

restored to our people for reburial.

Because the Indians had taken over the Bureau and no work was being done, the Attorney General of the D.C. District filed a temporary restraining order, then proceeded to issue an eviction notice to the Indians. They presented this to the Indians to get them out of the building and into the courts.

This was handed to them and they did not budge. Then Justice Department officials returned to the judge and requested that he sign a contempt of court citation against them so that the federal people could move in and make arrests.

The deadline was extended until 9 P.M. Wednesday evening. They were told, that if they were not out by this time, they would be held in contempt, and evicted.

Up until now they've remained in the building and said they will prepare to fight. Statements by leaders said they were prepared to die if necessary. They were NOT going to give up the BIA headquarters and would stay there.

They've been insisting this since last Thursday when they barricaded themselves in the building. Tonight (Monday) a little after midnight, people began to drift out of the building very inconspicuously, in twos and threes, some carrying bedrolls.

When asked where they were going, they said they were going over to the YMCA or to the Interdepartmental Auditorium which each had a few limited sleeping facilities.

When I left there, minutes before I called Tundra Times, there was only a skeleton crew left. I couldn't estimate exactly how many. You might think they've all gone to bed, but they've been leaving. Even a couple of the more militant leaders have left.

I don't know what is going to happen because this is a change of tactics, a complete turn-around.

This is the gist of the message I get from the leaders: OK, if you don't get loose and meet our demands, we're not going to give up the building without a fight. If we do have to go, we're going to take the building with us, either burn it or blow it up.

When I saw people leaving, I began to fear the time for this to happen might be quite near, unless they've deployed to take over something. Some observers are saying: What have they got up their sleeves now? Who are they going to capture? What are they going to do?

(Note: As we went to press, Tundra Times placed a call to BIA Offices in Washington, D.C. Our first call was intercepted by a master switchboard. At deadline, we finally got through and talked to an Indian girl within the building, and one of the leaders, Sid Mills, a Yakima Indian from Washington state. Mills announced that there was no longer a BIA.

"We have abolished the BIA. We now have and are in the NATIVE AMERICAN EMBASSY."

He said there were still 800-1200 Caravan people inside the building, including families and babies, who could be heard crying in the background. When asked how they had gotten control of the building, Mills answered: "We took it."

He said although they have been intimidated by the Justice Department, federal marshals, metropolitan police, and the White House, they would stay in the building. Negotiating teams were meeting with top presidential aides at the White House on election eve.)