

Indian News Notes

By VINCE LOVETT

Energy Resources on Indian Lands

An article in the Christian Science Monitor reports on the Carter Administration's gradual awakening to the strength of Indian tribes in energy resources. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, at least 12 per cent of the Nation's coal, three percent of the oil and natural gas reserves and 15 to 55 per cent of the Nation's uranium reserves are under Indian reservations. The White House, after being informed of these facts, invited the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT) to present its views to John O' Leary, head of the Federal Energy Administration and to members of the staff of James Schlesinger, Presidential adviser on energy. The Indian leaders requested: (1) help in inventorying their energy resources, (2) a review of past leases executed by the Government coupled with compensation for inequities, (3) technical and management training programs so Indians can manage their resources themselves, and, (4) a high-level voice in national energy policy-making.

Andrus at National Press Club

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus addressed the National Press Club May 10. The Secretary said he has rejected the traditional cabinet role at Interior which would include "stated concern but little action to help the American Indian." Andrus restated that he would not impede the creation of a separate Indian agency, if that was what the Indian wanted. "But if the decision is to leave this vital activity within the Department, I am guaranteeing that it will be given priority as a concern of the Interior. That is why I reshuffled the organization to make a slot for an Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs." He added, "I am a strong advocate of self-determination, of helping the tribes which desire help, technical assistance and counseling, but of encouraging those who want to run their own affairs to do just that."

Undersecretary asks views on Non-Indian Retirement Bill

Interior Undersecretary James Joseph has invited BIA employees to comment on Senate Bill 666, providing early retirement benefits to non-Indian employees of BIA and Indian Health Service adversely affected by the Indian preference employment policies. In D.C. the proposed legislation is commonly referred to as the "honky-out" bill. Joseph is scheduling five-minute meetings with individuals and small groups throughout the first part of this week. He has asked that written comments of not more than five pages be submitted by May 30.

Tahlequah Speaker bears Bad News

In an otherwise rather upbeat symposium on the American Indian, Sam Deloria of the American Indian Law Center at the University of New Mexico, was pessimistic. Deloria said "the atmosphere in Washington is being influenced by a new, strong, anti-Indian lobby known as the Interstate Congress for Equal Rights and Responsibilities and others which I call NARO, or the National Association of Redneck Organizations." Deloria said that Indians will be hearing a lot about "stale claims" which he said was a term meaning non-Indians are being inconvenienced and discomforted by Indian rights. He said the government will not be sending out any troops to protect Indian rights.

Reorganization of BIA Education Programs held up

The controversial reorganization plans of Indian Education Director Dr. William Demmert are being held up at the request of Interior Undersecretary James Joseph. In a recent memorandum to the Acting Commissioner, Joseph asked that further implementation of the reorganization be suspended until a new Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs has been appointed and has had the opportunity to review and consider all organizational proposals. Joseph said he planned to discuss organizational relationships, mission requirements and the overall structure of Indian affairs with the new Assistant Secretary.