

# Udall Plans To Reorganize Bureau of Indian Affairs

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall has promised a major reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in a speech to BIA employees. The goal of the reorganization is to aid in the growth of local initiative and local responsibility.

Commenting on past BIA performance, Udall said: "I think in terms of the Indian Bureau and all of you here. These have been good years, and I think in the main we have had good leadership. But I want to quickly add that I don't think that we've done enough, that our leadership has not been good enough, and that there's room for improvement. And I think that that begins with me as Secre-

tary and it goes down to the newest employees serving here in the lowest Civil Service ranks."

Stating that the government is under serious criticism in regard to its handling of Indian affairs, Udall gave comments from two university professors as examples. The first, an anthropologist, said: "Indians are being hauled, and pulled from hell to break-fast by a multiplicity of federal and state agencies, all out to solve the Indian problem and all seemingly headed in opposite directions. The Babel of voices, programs, policies, advice, coercion, directives, and prescriptions must be something beyond all comprehension. One thing

seems fairly clear, and this comes to me only in small part from my morning visitor, the one thing about which they all agree—other agencies, that is—is that it is time the Indians stopped listening to the BIA."

Another professor complained that "The moment government workers step into Indian communities with the resources and funds and trained people which government departments have, they take initiative out of Indian hands."

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# Reorganization...

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"The power structure with all that responsibility in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior is fully incompatible with the growth of local initiative and local responsibility."

Referring to the letters, Udall said: "I read them to convey to you my feeling that we are on trial in a way we haven't been before and that therefore the way to respond to such criticism is to redouble our efforts, to increase our insight and to see to it that we meet these criticisms that are made, if they are sound."

"We're going to begin in a few days by reorganizing the Indian Bureau at the top level," said Udall. "We hope that this will make it more action-minded. We hope this will speed up the decision-making process. We hope it will make it more responsive to the needs and desires of the Indian people."

Udall added that he felt that the American people are sympathetic to the plight of the Indian people, and will sup-

port any logical program to aid them. He felt that the Indians deserved the very best in education and economic opportunity that the country could offer.

The BIA employees were told "in these next few weeks of transition, we need your help, we need your suggestions, and I'm very serious about this. I don't mind if they come to me on an unsigned plain sheet of paper. I don't care whether they come in sharply critical. I don't care what your title is, if you have any suggestions, proposals or ideas or new programs or new effort within the Bureau, hand it all to the Commissioner or to any of us in the other building."

In concluding, Udall said, "It is my own conviction, on the basis of my long contact with the American Indian people, that they are ready to take new steps, they are ready to move forward at an even faster pace than they have been moving. And I think if we do our part, they will respond to the challenge."