

Indians Pressing Calif. Suit

On Thursday, May 7th, Judge B. Abbott Goldberg of the Sacramento Superior Court continued in force an order barring the State Advisory Commission on Indian Affairs from holding closed meetings or destroying its records, pending another hearing on July 31st.

The postponement of the hearing was requested by the State Attorney General's office which represented the Commission and its members, including Chairman John L. Harmer, State Senator from Glendale.

The Attorney General also asked the Court to dismiss the legislator members of the Indian Affairs Commission from the suit, claiming that they were privileged against any kind of lawsuit while the legislature is in session.

However, Judge Goldberg did not dismiss the suit against them but asked for further legal points on the question.

The suit was brought by the California Indian Education Association and a number of other Indian organizations, tribes and individuals.

It was the result of months of protests by Indians throughout the state against the State Advisory Commission on Indian Affairs, (none of whose members are Indian) for disregarding Indian wishes and holding secret meetings in violation of the state public meeting law.

The case was filed on behalf of the Indians by California Indian Legal Services, a statewide OEO program.

David Risling, Jr., a member of the Hoopa Tribe and Presi-

dent of the nationally recognized California Indian Education Association, said, concerning the court hearings:

"The Indian Affairs Commission, under Chairman Harmer, has closed its meetings to the Indian people. Now it is also trying to shut the courthouse door in their faces, so that they won't have any legal way of stopping the Commission's undemocratic and illegal closed meetings. This amounts to an admission that Senator Harmer and the Commission have been violating the law. They're afraid to even let a court hear the case."

On the legislative front, Senator Collier, most powerful legislator on the Indian Affairs Commission, announced that he is resigning from the Commission.