

Bruce Gets Hydroponical Tomatoes—

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Gets Unusual Gift

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce has received an unusual gift from Northern Pueblo Indian representatives—a case of vine-ripened, hydroponically-grown tomatoes—part of the first harvest of a commercial endeavor in New Mexico operated by Northern Pueblo Enterprises, Inc.

Vegetables grown hydroponically are maintained in a controlled environment and are fed nutrients by electronic sensing devices in the exact amounts needed for maximum growth and quality.

The occasion for the gift marked the signing of a \$650,000 contract to operate an Indian Action Team Training Program between Northern Pueblo Enterprises Inc. and the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior.

To date, the corporation has received more than \$1.2 million in grants and loans, principally from the BIA, the Department of Labor, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Four Corners Regional Commission.

Besides the hydroponics operation, the Corporation also operates a 6-day guided tour through New Mexico's historic pueblos; a native products industry; a construction company, and a training division to train Indians to work in the programs.

Training money is supplied largely by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Employment Assistance Division through the Indian Action Team program, a new BIA effort to meet a not so new Indian need—jobs close to home.

Plans are already underway to expand the hydroponics operation, according to Harold Martinez, general manager of Northern Pueblo Enterprises. In the next year, another "hothouse" will be opened on an experimental basis, and will produce other vegetables such as cucumbers or corn.

Eight hydroponics hothouses, with approximately 1100 tomato plants, are in operation.

Northern Pueblo Enterprises Inc. is owned and operated by seven Northern Pueblos—Nambé, Picuris, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Taos and Tesuque.

After sampling the tomatoes, Commissioner Bruce reported they taste "just great" and that his wife was also pleased with low calorie, high-vitamin delight.