

Menominee Restoration on Way

NEOPIT, Wis.—(AIPA)—Nine Menominees, including four women and five men, were elected here March 2 to create the interim governing body of the newly-restored Menominee Tribe, to undertake important tribal tasks for most of 1974.

Elected to serve on the so-called Menominee Restoration Committee in a short-term fashion in order to draft a new tribal constitution and by-laws, and to fulfill the functions of a tribal government until the tribal constitution is completed, were:

Ada Deer, Washington, D.C., 655 votes; Sylvia O. Wilbur, Keshena, Wis., 492 votes; Shirley E. Daly, Neopit, 441 votes; Benjamin Miller, Neopit, 375 votes; Warren Kakwitch, Neopit, 330 votes; Jerome A. Grignon, Neopit, 334 votes; Carol J. Dodge, Keshen, Wis., 329 votes; Robert J. Grignon, Shawano, Wis., 293 votes; and John A. Peters, Greens Bay, Wis. 290 votes.

The candidates were nominated in early January and elected March 2 under terms of the 1973 Menominee Restoration Act signed in December by President Richard M. Nixon. Both secret and write-in ballots were authorized for the election.

A special provision in the restoration act authorizes the new Menominee Restoration Committee to contract and plan for tribal services during the interim period it serves.

Tribal rolls, closed to new offspring of the Menominees in 1954, were also declared reopened under terms of the act. The Secretary of the Interior is currently making determinations on the new membership of the tribe for the last two decades.

The work ahead for the new Menominee Restoration Committee—the drafting and distribution of a constitution and by-laws—is directly related to the creation of new tribal rolls, because each member on the rolls of voting age is entitled to a

copy of the draft for review before constitutional elections set tentatively for this August.

Enrolled tribal voting members are required to have 30 days to review and weigh the proposed constitution.

Once the tribe votes on the constitution itself, it has four months to conduct another election by secret ballot to elect a new slate of tribal officials provided for in the new constitution. A minimum of 30 per cent

of the tribal electorate must participate in order for the election to be valid.

The trouble-plagued Menominee Enterprises Inc. (MEI), holder of all tribal assets since the 1961 tribal termination, together with the Secretary of the Interior are now developing a plan to be submitted to the U.S. Congress by December through which the new tribal governing body will assume control of all tribal assets in trust.