



INDIAN IMAGE PROMOTION—The National Congress of American Indians has launched a nationwide campaign aimed at improving the image of the American Indian. The campaign is being aired on television and by large colorful

billboards shown in the picture. The campaign is aimed to combat harmful publicity about Indians in mass media and then work toward a more accurate and positive portrayal of the Indian and his way of life.

NCAI Launching its Nationwide Campaign to Better Indian Image

A nationwide public awareness campaign aimed at improving the image of the American Indian was officially kicked off in Los Angeles March 14 at a press conference at 2:00 p.m. in the Westwood Room of the Century Plaza Hotel.

Sponsored and conducted by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the theme of the promotional campaign is "The American Indian—A New Awareness and Readiness."

Gov. Ronald Reagan, Sen. George Murphy, Sen. Alan Cranston, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert Bennett, as well as representatives from both state and city government were invited to attend.

In an effort to present a true and realistic picture of the American Indian, a series of public service announcements dealing with the Indian's culture, his value today as an employee in modern industry and business will be shown in the coming weeks over the major TV networks and their affiliates across the nation.

To tie in with the TV announcements, colorful billboards depicting the campaign's theme have been posted during the month of March in Oklahoma City, San Francisco-Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, New York, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C.

This nationwide project is one of the major programs of the newly-formulated American Indian Media Service (AIMS) Committee, created by the NCAI to help eliminate the false, derogatory, and harmful publicity which often appears about the Indian in the nation's mass media and work toward a more accurate and positive portrayal of the Indian and his way of life.

One component of the AIMS Committee is an advisory media council made up of professional media specialists.

Members are: Ben West, Vice President and General Manager, Cimmaron Television Corporation, Oklahoma City, who will serve as council chairman; Michael Hayward, Chief, United Nations Television, New York; Harry Ackerman, Executive Producer, Screen Gems, Hollywood; and Hubbell Robinson, independent producer, New York.

Policies will be decided and executed by a second component, an all-Indian committee composed of Roger Jourdain, Chairman of the Red Lake Band of Minnesota Chippawas, Red Lake, Minn. and NCAI Minneapolis area Regional Vice President; Marshall Tome, Navajo, Assistant ICAP Director, Arizona State University; and Earl Old Person, Chairman of the Blackfeet Tribe, Browning, Montana.

Another committee member will be chosen at a later date.

Recognition of the need for such a committee to act as a continuing liaison between the press, broadcasting, and movie industries grew out of a controversy in the summer of 1967 over the announcement by the American Broadcasting Co. that a new TV series dealing with the life of General George A. Custer and his exploits at the Battle of Little Big Horn would be part of that network's Fall line-up of shows.

Response to this announcement on the part of the Indian

community was immediate and emphatic. The NCAI was joined in its efforts to halt the series by many tribal spokesmen, Indian interest organizations, religious and legal groups as well as sympathetic individuals.

It was felt that the series, by the nature of its content, would only serve to perpetuate the distortions and stereotypes of the handicaps and loss of self-esteem among members of the Indian population.

Although the degree to which Indian opposition can be credited with the cancellation of the Custer series by December, 1967 cannot be determined, the confrontation demonstrated a new awareness and readiness on the part of the Indian to speak out in defense of his interests.