

# Government treatment is irresponsible

By JOHN L. HEFFLE, SR.

I am deeply concerned about Native people and their treatment under Government and its laws and policies.

First let us refresh our memories in regards to the relationship between American Indian, Alaskan Natives and the U.S. Government.

The Indian Bureau was first establishing in 1826 in the war Department. It was to be later transferred to and be under direct contract of the newly created Department of the Interior. This was in 1849.

At its onset the BIA as it was so called, was to make treaties with Indians so the Indians would relinquish land they had held for centuries before the coming of the Europeans, so Settlers could take the land for homesteads, to regulate Indian trade, to remove Indians from choice land by force and to civilize the savage Indians by manual training, agriculture and mechanics.

Late the BIA's policy was to concentrate large numbers of Indians on Small land areas called "Reservations". This was accomplished because if Indians followed the nomadic Subsistence way of life for hunting and fishing, they used more land than if they were placed and controlled in specific areas.

Therefore it is apparent that originally BIA policies were mainly directed to coincide with statutes passed by Congress to protect non-Indians and assist the pioneers in their conquest of the West. The BIA spoke with two tongues, and represented two different entities. The Indian and the non-Indian although the BIA had "Trust Responsibility" to the Indian.

Later it was desirable to break treaties and Tribal organizations, tribal customs and communal land as a means of liquidating the Indian problem.

It seems strange that all this was accomplished though Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 "that land could not be taken from Indians except by their consent or by a declaration of war by Congress against Indian tribes." (This ordinance was reaffirmed in 1789) and this was never accomplished by Congress, so therefore most armed conflicts and the subsequent taking of land from Indians in favor of the white people violated this ordinance.

Indians were made citizens in 1924 and in 1926 Alaska Natives (called aborigines) were included under this and other Indian policies and regulations, but this only created more problems for the Indian people.

An office called the Branch of relocation was established within the structure of the BIA in 1951, to send Indian from the reservations to the cities to help them seek employment. Then the years Indians were aided by this program. It trained thousands in a wide variety of trades with 70% completing the courses and some of them being subsequently employed.

In 1953, Congress passed "House Concurrent Resolution 108" which advocated termination of aid and protection of Indians as rapidly as possible.

During the years of 1954 to 1960, this was done to 61 tribes and groups by the withdrawal of services previously provided to them by the BIA.

Indians were encouraged to revive old arts and crafts and create outfits for their sale, not to return to the "old ways" but to do business with the Tourist trade.

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# Where is equal justice ?

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Today, the Indian is still no better off than he was, classed as 2nd class citizens, mostly unaccepted in the mainstream of the 20th century work force.

There exists today the problem of discrimination in the system where Indians are supposed to equal under the law.

It is rampant in housing, services in certain areas, Law Enforcement and the Criminal Justice System.

Indian people (this term includes Alaskan Natives) are not to be judged by race but as equals under the laws.

Alaskan Native make front page as drunks, and local police even made statements in regards to the 2nd Ave. Native. They are blamed for the decadence of 2nd Ave, in Fairbanks and 4th Ave in Anchorage. Treated as statistics in surveys.

Municipal Ordinances were passed against drinking from bottles in public and carrying opened bottles in possession. They were aimed at the Native Community as a answer to a problem and treated only the symptoms not the disease.

I wonder how many Natives own the bars or liquor stores that sell to Natives? Who derives profit from the sales? Law Enforcement agencies continue to confront Natives doing the same thing as other Races. Who goes to jail 9 times out of 10??

Judges who are to be impartial give harsher sentences to Natives who commit crimes, than whites as in a report put out by the Judicial Council last year. This shows discrimination on part of certain judges.

I feel sincerely, that these judges should be identified and their names published for public awareness, to protect judges who are not and are dedicated to see that people are judged by evidence and not by race.

After the judges are identified, they should be removed from the bench for violating the oath of office, fined and disbarred..

By not identifying the judges, how can one be assured of a fair trial and sentenced accordingly if found guilty, also one could challenge such judges for cause and if this is not done it leaves one without remedy under the law.

The judges just received a pay raise. Are they being rewarded for injustice? What next? What ever happened to freedom and justice for all?

Why don't the Court system have classes on Native culture to include judges and Law enforcement personnel so they may have a better understanding of our Native people. What good is Bush Justice meeting if it produces nothing but perhaps bitterness.

The Judges whoever they may be, are thieves for they stole from the Natives part of their life and freedom beyond what should have been taken under the law.

Why does BLM take years to give a Native his allotment reduce it in size arbitrarily, and give a white man land of 160 acres in 3 years for a homestead—Preference??

Are Native people to be treated less than boat people or Jewish people in Russia (??) whom we seem to be so concerned about.

Where are Indian Civil Rights? Why don't the Regional corporations and AFN do something besides pass resolutions?

I warned people in 1974 in the Tundra Times about the great land steal by the Department of Interior no one listened nor seem to care until it was too late. Will anyone listen now about the Biased Sentencing and the ill treatment or will they wait?

I am only asking for the courtesy of people to take the time to understand, to place themselves in the Native's shoes and not allow inadequacies of laws and policies to prevail no man is perfect, and all are to be equal. We should learn to live together, understand each other and respect one another's personal feelings, religion, cultures and live side by side in peaceful Harmony.