

Inupiat Paitot People's Heritage

Den Nena Henash Our Land Speaks

Unanguq Tunuktauq The Aleuts Speak



Tlingit
Ut kah neek Informing and Reporting

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BRUCE MEETS INDIAN EDITORS



PRESIDENT SIGNS—Paul Bernal (left) and Juan De Jesus Romero of the Taos Pueblo delegation witness a historic moment in Indian affairs as President Nixon signs into law H.R. 471 on December 15 returning to the Taos Pueblo people

approximately 48,000 acres of land and the Blue Lake. The signing ceremonies ended 64 years of effort by the people of Taos Pueblo to regain these lands.

—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Photo

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Explains Recent BIA Reorganization

By MADELYN SHULMAN
Staff Writer

DENVER—"This is one of the highlights of my career in public service," Commissioner Louis R. Bruce told a group of newsmen from Indian newspapers who gathered in Denver Monday afternoon to question him on changes in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"This is the first press conference by an official of the U.S. Government with an Indian press," said the Commissioner among Indian affairs.

He called the press conference to explain the reasons behind recent realignment to Bureau Chief. Among the charges which Commissioner Bruce replied to were those that he had failed to consult with tribal council and native association leaders before realigning field personnel.

"We are trying to set up a system for consult action with the tribes," said the Commissioner. "This would involve a structure composed of tribal leaders across the country."

"We have 30 days to set this group," the Commissioner said. "As of now, changes in the Bureau have not yet become permanent regulations."

Bruce also expressed his intentions to consult and inform

members of the newly formed Indian Press Association which was the basis for the press conference called by the Bureau in Denver. The Denver conference invited 20 editors from Indian newspapers across the country and in Alaska.

"Many times," the Commissioner said, "we faced a situation in the Indian press where some of our news is gotten by rumors. I look forward to seeing you face to face and being able to explain what is going on."

The Commissioner denied that the new reannounced policy for reassignment of field administrator is "negotiable."

"In no case will the BIA allow such an entry without first consulting with the tribe or Alaskan native group," said the Commissioner.

In reference to the policy statement of reassignment of employees: if the people feel the field administrator is doing his job, they would not release him. The new policy requires a review of the field administrator by the local tribes or Alaskan native group involved every six months after the field administrator (formally the superintendent) is initially 2 years in office. He will be evaluated on his ability to involve Indian tribes in the day to day operation of the old programs as well as other areas.

"There are some serious situations in the BIA," admitted Commissioner Bruce.

He described the situations in the BIA where present superintendents and area directors were exacting return on previous favors from tribal council members in votes of support when these BIA officers came

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Nixon Signs Taos Pueblo Land Bill

On December 15, President Nixon signed H.R. 471, the bill which declares that certain lands in Carson National Forest, New Mexico are held in trust for the Pueblo de Taos.

The 48,000 acre tract of land includes the Blue Lake area, the center of Taos Pueblo religious customs since the fourteenth century.

In 1906, the land was made part of the Carson National Forest. The Indian Claims Commission determined the government took these lands without compensation. Due to the importance of this area to their people, the Taos Pueblo have refused to take money in compensation and pushed for the return of these lands.

H.R. 471 declares the U.S. holds title, in trust for the Pueblo de Taos, to the Blue Lake area. It will become part of the Pueblo de Taos reservation, administered by the Secretary of the Interior as are other such trust lands.

Under the new law, the Indians can use the land for traditional purposes only—religious ceremonies, hunting and fishing, a source of water, forage for livestock, wood, timber and other natural resources for their personal use.

Except for these uses, the land will forever remain wild and will be administered as a wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

The act also provides for entry of nonmembers of the tribe, with consent of the Taos Pueblo, for purposes compatible with

wilderness preservation. It authorizes the Pueblo, with tribal funds, to arrange the relinquishment of present leases or permits which were previously granted concerning the lands.

Finally, the bill directs the Indian Claims Commission to determine to what extent the value of the Blue Lake area offsets any claims the Taos may have against the United States.

Civilian Dentist and PHS Dentist Disagree on Rural Dental Care

By MADELYN SHULMAN
Staff Writer

With a rural population scattered among small communities separated by hundreds and thousands of miles, how does Alaska provide dental care for all of its citizens?

Mainly, since most rural residents are Alaskan Natives, it is the federal government which faces this responsibility.

The Indian Health Service, the branch of the U.S. Public Health Service which provides health care to the Indian population of the U.S. stations dentists throughout the state of Alaska to give dental care to Alaskan Natives at no fee.

Is this the best method for providing such care? Many dentists in Alaska disagree, suggesting a system in which private dentists would provide dental services in most areas under government contract.

This system was recently abandoned in Fairbanks for medical services. What are the relative advantages?

"Contract care in metropolitan as well as in remote areas can provide incentive for better distribution of private dentists," says Dr. G.T. Morrow, President of the Alaskan Dental Society.

Dr. Morrow recently wrote to the Tundra Times to answer questions about the Alaska Dental Society's views on dental care in Alaska.

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Eskimos' Apparent Perceptual Gifts Can Lead to Technical, Science Fields

COLLEGE — Eskimos have been referred to in highly laudatory terms by explorers and present day observers for their map-making ability and mechanical talents.

Dr. Judith Kleinfeld, an assistant professor of educational psychology at the University of Alaska, suggests that these aptitudes may reflect "unusually high intellectual abilities" in such areas as perceptual analysis and image memory.

In a paper just published she says that the performance of Eskimos on measures of their learning abilities "approximates

and in some instances exceeds national norms."

"In an exploratory study reported in this paper," Dr. Kleinfeld writes, "village Eskimo students surpassed urban Caucasian students in their ability to recall complexly structured images. Since the cultural biases of conventional psychological tests may result in a test score that is lower than the person's level of ability, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Eskimos' actual abilities in these areas may be even higher than such studies indicate."

Professor Kleinfeld interprets

her suggestion to mean that not every Eskimo possesses the talents to which she refers but that "in a group of Eskimos selected at random, more individuals who have high ability in this area will probably be found than in some other randomly selected group."

The academic progress of Eskimos, she says, may be substantially increased by educational methods that build on Eskimo students' learning strengths.

Her paper, entitled "Cognitive Strengths of Eskimos and

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