

Speaker attacks Interior policies

By SHERRY STRATTON
Of the Emerald

"Phony facts, phony laws, and phony administration of those facts and laws . . . it is this way that the Indians have been robbed of their natural resources." That was how William Veeder, a water conservation and utilization specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) summed up his feelings as he spoke on a panel discussion of "Protection of Natural Resources and Indian Water Rights" at the Eugene Hotel Wednesday morning.

"Let's quit the hypocrisy, let's face the facts as to what has transpired in the Department of Interior," he said as he issued a challenge to Hans Walker, Jr., a fellow panel member and Director of the Indian Water Rights section of the BIA. Veeder challenged Walker to hold a hearing to determine whether or not his claims of phony water studies being presented to the tribes were, in fact, true.

On the subject of inventories of water rights Veeder said, "Don't let me lull you to sleep. During the process of these inventories you can rest assured that your water is being taken by federal projects and non-Indians."

No platitudes

"I am not going to stand quietly by and hear platitudes upon platitudes upon hypocrisy anymore," he said.

Veeder gave several specific cases where Indians have lost or are about to lose their water rights.

Sam Cagey, Lummi Indian from the Columbia Tribe spoke up in praise of Veeder's efforts on behalf of the Indian tribes. Cagey said that Veeder made his tribe aware of their water rights only three years ago and the tribe is now fighting to retain and strengthen those rights. Before 1969, when Veeder explained their rights to them, said Cagey, they weren't aware they had any water rights to the Columbia River.

Bob Dellwo, Spokane tribal attorney, told the gathering that the basic move in protection of water rights is from the tribal attorney. But he said that the initial steps are up to the council and the tribe. They must "discover appropriations of their water by non-Indians and generate a sense of alarm in the proper places." Often little or no notification of the tribe is required by law when non-Indians are issued permits to use water on or near the reservations.

Reminder

Angelo Iadarola, another tribal attorney, told the convention that forests, hunting, fishing, agriculture and oil were other areas where Indians should make an effort to protect their rights. He also reminded the tribal chairmen that water rights constitute real property and if they are taken away tribes should receive compensation.

David Red Fox, a candidate for Oregon House of Representatives from District 39, told the Emerald after the panel discussion that he felt water rights were one of the most important issues being discussed at the convention. Red Fox said that if Indians don't define and fight for their water rights now, it will be the same as when Manifest Destiny in the 1840's gave white men the justification for taking Indian land. Red Fox explained that a water inventory

is an inventory of who has the rights to the water on reservations and bordering reservations.

Red Fox said he thought the main objectives of the convention themes of unity and strength would be the most important accomplishment of the 5-day gathering. "If you were here on the first day there was a militant attitude present. This has now disappeared."

Red Fox said he has been working for a year to bring the NTCA convention to Eugene. When asked if he intended to introduce any legislation relative to Indian problems if elected, Red Fox responded negatively saying "I am running because I want to represent all people," but added that if Indians came to him requesting help that he would help them.



Floyd Poitras, Klamath Falls, was one participant in Wednesday night's NTCA pow-wow.

At NTCA convention

Need for federal help expressed

Concern over non-passage of desired federal legislation was expressed almost uniformly by delegates to the National Tribal Chairmen's Association (NTCA) convention in Eugene.

"The administration is not moving on this legislation because we're not," said Martin Seneca, a Native American attorney with the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development who spoke Wednesday morning on a panel discussing Indian Legislation.

Seneca made the following recommendations to the tribal chairmen:

—Tribal chairmen should be visiting Senators and Congressmen when they are in Washington, D.C. to establish contacts, whether they have a particular bill in congress or not.

—Become informed about Indian legislation. This organization could be very effective in distributing this information.

—Take positions, and to let Congressmen and Senators know the Indians' stand.

Seneca and other Native American lawyers in Washington, D.C. have been having breakfast meetings with Senators and Congressmen, finding this a good way of expressing themselves unofficially and helpful in expanding the legislators understanding of what the Indian's problems are.

"Their (the legislators) primary concern," Seneca said, "is what do Indians think about this legislation?"

Charlie Sauther, a solicitor for

the Dept. of Interior, had earlier told the tribal chairmen repeatedly, "You people have got to express yourselves. There is no other way those representatives can know how you feel if you don't tell them."

Sauther said that, of the eight or ten bills included in the President's legislative package on Indian affairs, not one has been passed.

"The legislative process is not complex, but it is hard to penetrate," Sauther said.

Morris Thompson, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Juneau area director, suggested to the convention delegates that they "consider establishing a fully funded, fully staffed lobbying effort in Washington, D.C."

"Lobby the administration and Congress, for your point of view," he said. "We have seen that it is possible to win major concessions from the legislature."

Another panel member, Joe Exendine, a deputy director of the Indian Health Service, suggested to the delegates that "uncontrollable funding" might be appropriate for the Indian Health Service. Uncontrollable funding means that costs of all medical needs will be met. The Veterans Administration and several other agencies that give health care operate under this type of funding, but the IHS is limited to a budget, Exendine said.

Of the 51 Indian Hospitals in the nation, Exendine revealed that half of them do not meet hospital accreditation standards. He stressed that funding is needed to replace them or bring them up to

standards, and that funding is also needed to attract qualified personnel to work in the hospitals.

A delegate who is a governor from one of the New Mexico Pueblo tribes supported Exendine's claims when he told of the conditions of the Indian Hospital in New Mexico. The New Mexico

Hospital has only one bathroom for men, one for women, and only one bathtub, he said. The place is stuffy, crowded, and the babies are put in the hallways for a lack of room elsewhere. He said that the Public Health Service is dragging its feet and that once again, Indian appeals for action have been ignored.

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