

HIRAM ROBINS PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO P. L. 587, FAVORS TRIBAL MEMBERS ASSUMING MOST MGT. RESPONSIBILITIES

Hiram R. Robbins, prominent Klamath Tribal member, introduced during the present month a proposal advocating a modification of Public Law 587 through six major points of revision. Included with the proposal was an explanation as to why a new solution to Klamath termination problems is needed as well as supporting arguments in favor of Mr. Robbins' proposals as such a solution.

The Klamath Education Program is herewith providing in full Mr. Robbins' proposed changes to P. L. 587. Also included in a condensed form is his explanation of why new changes are needed and his summary of the values of his proposals.

As is customary, the Klamath Education Program expresses no opinion and takes no stand regarding these proposals.

Solution To Klamath Termination Problem

That the Federal Government withdraw completely from the Reservation under the following submitted plan.

1. Qualified Indians to take over all salaried positions under their own management except two top management positions, these top positions to be filled by an Indian Council or Board of Directors securing competent outside personnel.

2. The Tribal government and management to handle all sales of timber on the basis of a sustained yield requirement, and to promote earliest reasonable development of water, mineral, surface, sub-surface, and other resources.

3. Property within Reservation to be subject to taxation.

4. Tribal members to retain all present hunting and fishing rights on tribal property, subject to minimum regulations from outside authority.

5. The Indians to become United States citizens with all the rights and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

6. The matter of withdrawal of members from the tribe to be handled by the Tribal government.

Need for New Solution to Klamath Termination Problems

I. Proposed solutions aim at conservation of natural resources but do not conserve human resources, as witness:

a. P. L. 587 makes it possible for many Indians to gain easy access to large sums of money which will result, in

many cases, in these Indians soon having the money spent and being reduced to poverty and dependence on charity.

b. Existing plans do not offer provisions which will enable the Indians to get back into a situation where self reliance and initiative will restore their morale.

II. Proposed solutions do not conserve for the Indians full benefit of the natural resources: Present proposals affect timber conservation but seem not to consider water, mineral, surface, sub-surface, and other resources.

III. Proposed amendments to P. L. 587 would apparently leave much of the present tribal property in a non-taxable status, causing continued hardship, tax-wise, on Klamath County.

Values of this Solution

I. It would give to the Indians full control of the land and resources that by all rights belong to them.

II. It would put the Indians in a position to work out their own future by their own labor and management.

III. It would materially lessen the probability of many of them becoming public charges.

IV. It would protect the timber resources of the Reservation from unwise cutting practices and depletion.

V. It would conserve to the Indians their proper rights in all resources of the reservation.

VI. It would guarantee to the whole Klamath Basin the following:

a. Continued proper regard to control of water runoff.

b. Continued sound economic practices and development in the area.

VII. It would benefit Klamath County through:

a. Increased tax revenue.

b. Probable lower Public Welfare costs.

c. Proper management of water run-off, selective cutting of timber.

d. Placing the Klamath Marsh on the county tax roll, with probabilities of its development for recreation.

e. Early development of mineral and other Reservation resources.

VIII. It would benefit the Federal government through:

a. The increase in tax returns.

b. Lessened expense in the Indian Service of the Department of Interior.

INDIVIDUAL STATEMENTS GIVEN BY EXEC. COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT HEARINGS

A day by day account of the major developments in the Washington hearings on Klamath Termination is contained in a report to the Klamath Tribe prepared by Glen Wilkinson, tribal attorney, and four executive committee members, Dibbon Cook, Boyd J. Jackson, Jessie Kirk and Seldon Kirk.

Following the joint statement prepared by the four above mentioned committee members, individual testimonies were presented.

The following are extracts from above-mentioned report to the Klamath Tribe dated February 13, 1958, regarding the testimonies given.

"Mr. Cook emphasized that the Klamath Reservation was the heritage and homeland of the Tribe, that many social implications were involved in implementing P. L. 587, that such implications had not been adequately dealt with and that two prices . . . one Indian and one non-Indian seemed to be discussed. He said that some tribal members are blinded by the prospect of considerable money and those are the ones who are trying to sell the very thing their ancestors left, not thinking of their descendants at any time. He closed by saying that he was opposed to termination, but that federal purchase might be a solution.

"Mr. J. L. Kirk advised the sub-committee that he felt P. L. 587 was a weasel-worded law, that it has caused considerable confusion among Indians and non-Indians, that he still has serious questions as to what will happen, and wonders if the Klamaths will be cheated again. He felt this would be the inevitable result unless more time is provided to arrange a fair deal. He dwelt at some length on the subsurface assets owned by the Klamath Tribe and indicated that the general summary of assets furnished to the delegates on January 31 represented inadequate compensation for the tribal property.

"The next witness was Mr. Boyd J. Jackson. He recounted the history of liquidation and voluntary withdrawal bills which preceded introduction of a termination bill, the latter being directed by Congress when it passed H. Con. Res. 108 in 1953. He recalled the fact that tribal representatives agreed on P. L. 587 as enacted only after assurance that amendments would be forthcoming if necessary to avert a break up of the Reservation. He mentioned that tribal representatives wished to be pointed to with pride instead of criticism. He therefore hoped that the federal government was doing its best to avoid selling the Tribe out and leave it with only stumpland. As did Mr. Kirk, he expressed disappointment that the appraisal had not attributed values to the subsurface rights. In answer to a question by Senator Neuberger, he said he would rather sell the Reservation for the "realization

value" than have P. L. 587 carried out, provided the Tribe is guaranteed the right to sue for values in excess of the realization value.

"Mr. Seldon E. Kirk was the last of the undersigned delegates to testify. He expressed fear that the Indians would not get a fair deal under any legislation proposed, that the government was not willing to pay a fair price. He said that the purpose of termination was to terminate all Indians from federal supervision, but P. L. 587 was terminating only a few. In answer to inquiries from Senator Neuberger, he expressed a preference for P.L. 587 with the withdrawal provisions eliminated, and reiterated the conviction (set forth in the combined statement of the four delegates) that Congress should merely turn the Reservation over to the Tribe and allow it to continue its operation if total federal purchase was not approved. At that point, Senator Neuberger put the question to the delegates whether, if the federal government would pay fair price for the Klamath Marsh, and turn over the remainder of the Reservation to the Tribe, taking out the withdrawal provision, the Tribe would be satisfied. The delegates and tribal attorney were requested to study the situation, confer with other members of the Tribe and advise Senator Neuberger respecting their attitude on this possibility."

(Continued from Page 1, Col 4)

for timber rights of way, the recent sale of the Wildhorse units, sales of personal property, and the difference in the status of tribal funds." He added, however, that the modification of the total value will be minor.

For a general summary of all the value-units listed in the appraisal of tribal assets, given according to type of unit, see page five.