



Siletz News II

April 21, 1993

Vol. 5, no. 1

All Modesty Aside

A Proposition

With Indian gambling on the downhill slope, the question becomes what will be the next get rich quick scheme in Indian Country. The hazardous/nuclear waste storage business, of course, has been made to look lucrative to U.S. Tribes. Then again, this is pretty old news, too.

But both nuclear waste storage (Yucca Mountain, NV tops the list of proposed permanent nuclear dumping grounds) and high-stakes gambling have associations with Nevada. If our wish is to predict the next wave of "economic development" for Indian Country, maybe we ought to consider what else the State of Nevada is famous for.

I might be mistaken, but I believe that the only state that allows prostitution under its laws is Nevada. Tribes (with federal urging, of course) could break Nevada's current monopoly by legalizing prostitution themselves.

Like nuclear-waste storage and casino-style gaming, brothels would be a sure money-maker for U.S. Indian tribes. We're talking about the United States, after all, where the sale of sex is a thriving and growing industry.

The question is when will tribal governments deal themselves into the millions of U.S. dollars spent each year on what's been called Europe's oldest profession.

My legally-minded friends tell me that there is only one hitch to this plan. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that state criminal statutes overrule tribal laws and practices to the contrary. In short, the Feds say that Indian tribes can't operate brothels in states that call prostitution a felony.

Land trades between tribes may be a way around this impasse, however. For instance, the Siletz Tribal Council—recently blocked by the governor of Oregon from building a gaming center in the state capitol of Salem—could contact the Ft. McDermitt Paiute Tribe in Nevada whose Tribal Council is planning to open a nuclear waste storage facility. The one hitch at Ft. McDermitt is a federal law that says only sites outside the State of Nevada can be considered as potential temporary dumps for nuclear waste. The Ft. McDermitt Tribe has a small amount of land inside the

continued on page 2, "Proposition"

Editorial

Just Flush

The wave of interest in Indian high-stakes gambling, like all ways to make quick and easy money, will soon play itself out. The question at Siletz is whether the Tribe will be able to cash in any chips before the wave is history.

More than just money, of course, is at work. Anyone on the Siletz Tribal Council, for instance, will tell you that Siletz is championing the cause of Western Oregon tribes who have precious little reservation lands suitable for gaming centers and other forms of "economic development." How the other Western Oregon Tribes see us is another matter. A clear majority of the Tribes whose cause Siletz is championing are also opposed to the Siletz plan to build a gaming center in Salem. Oh, well, this appears to be a detail that will not detour us from our pursuit of Justice (or is that spelled "Just Us?").

On a still deeper (and more hopeful) level, the Siletz Tribal Council's pursuit of gaming in Salem can be seen clearly to oppose the psychology behind most official actions of federal and state bodies: the psychology of elimination. Elimination is a funny word. It means both "to kill" and "to defecate."

Attempts to "eliminate" the Indian sum up most U.S. federal and state relations to Indian tribes. When it proved impossible to kill outright specific Indian peoples, white governments have historically turned toward "eliminating" these Indian nations outside the area of white supremacist rule. Witness the relocation of the Cherokee or any other program that sought to confine Indian people behind certain boundaries.

This is what the US Government has meant by "reservations." They're not so much places for Indians to live as they are places to contain what white society imagined they were eliminating: Indians. To be more direct, as whites imagine their collective selves and their governments to be a "body" (and they do this quite a bit—witness such phrases as "body politic" and "corporation," a word that comes from the Latin corpus which means "body"), so they figure the Indian into the equation as shit.

Now, Siletz is asking a U.S. District Court to go against this psychology and history of elimination. Siletz is asking that Indian tribes be able to acquire

continued on page 2, "Flush"