

Indian News Notes

Assistant Secretary Swimmer told a House subcommittee April 2 that the BIA's initiatives for 1988 reflect "a different way of doing business" in Indian Country. Swimmer and other BIA officials appeared before the House Interior appropriations subcommittee which heard four hours of testimony on the bureau's 1988 budget request. Rep. Sidney R. Yates (D-IL) chaired the hearing.

"Overall, I think we have the amount of money in the 1988 budget request that we need," said Swimmer, whose agency has requested \$984.9 million. "We seem to be spending a lot of money but we're not solving a lot of problems. The real problems are being solved by some of the tribal leaders out there that are successful despite the BIA." The following are highlights of the day's testimony:

BIA Elementary and Secondary Schools

Swimmer said he has proposed that management of BIA run schools be localized by contracting with tribal governments. He said if tribes opt not to take that responsibility, the BIA will turn to other local education

agencies like public school systems to operate the schools. He pointed out that the BIA will continue to fund the schools. Swimmer said "bureaucratic hold-ups", like the delay in publishing education regulations, could be avoided if schools were run by local people.

ECONOMIC SELF-ASSISTANCE

The BIA is proposing a comprehensive plan aimed at breaking a cycle of welfare dependency by providing work, training and education opportunities to recipients of general assistance. Swimmer said the BIA is conducting a survey that will match these recipients with work opportunities in Indian Country. He said some of these people feel helpless to change their future because they are dependent on the BIA. If there were work opportunities and self-help projects, they would be able to make change and affect their futures, Swimmer said.

BIA SCHOOL FACILITIES

Dr. Ron Esquerro, head of BIA operation, testified that all of the bureau's school facilities have been inspected for safety violations.

Merritt Youngdeer, director of BIA facilities management, joined Swimmer and Esquerro in requesting that the committee return control of BIA facilities management from the Department-run Office of Construction Management. The committee denied the return in an earlier letter to the Secretary of the Interior. The Office of Construction Management has been directing the BIA facilities program for the past year.

TUITION CHARGE AT BIA POST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Swimmer told the committee that the proposal to charge students at BIA post secondary schools approximately \$850 per year is based on both budgetary and philosophic concerns. He said the charge would avoid budget cuts elsewhere in the budget but more importantly it causes students to put equity into the education they receive. "We must try to get a commitment from students and staff that there has to be an exchange for something of value," Swimmer said.

FORESTRY

The assistant secretary told the committee that the BIA is not pursuing a plan to contract the management of Indian forests to the private sector. He said that it is something tribes should consider but the move is not part of the BIA's 1988 initiatives.

FLAT ADMINISTRATIVE FEE

The BIA is preparing proposed regulations that will implement a flat administrative fee in lieu of indirect costs. A full consultation process will be conducted before any flat fee is implemented.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Swimmer said that he has been adamant that the BIA not construct alcohol and substance abuse treatment centers immediately without studying where and how they can be most effective. The BIA was given approximately \$12 million to build centers as part of last year's omnibus drug bill.

BIA: 82% Indian

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is 82 percent Indian, according to a recent BIA Equal Employment Opportunity study. The report also shows an equal distribution of males and females among the BIA's more than 12,000 Indian employees. "The Bureau of Indian Affairs is very much an Indian preference, equal opportunity organization," said Assistant Secretary Swimmer, commenting on the annual EEO report. The BIA employs over 14,000 full and part-time workers. They are by race, 82 percent Indian, 17 percent White and one percent other. Of the federal government's four employment categories — all but the professional category are predominantly Indian.

There are 1,773 positions classified as professional and 42 percent of those are held by Indians. The report indicated that three areas in particular are lacking Indian personnel. They are range conservation, where only eight of the 61 positions are Indian; forestry, with 54 Indians out of 280 positions; and soil science, with one Indian out of 56 positions. "This is a good indication of where the Bureau needs to focus its recruiting and training efforts in the years to come. Indian people are very proud of their lands and these are three areas in which they can make a difference," Swimmer said. The average grade for a BIA employee is a GS-7.

Salmon/Steelhead Lawsuit

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the National Wildlife Federation, the State of Idaho, the Washington Departments of Fisheries and Game, the Northwest Resource Information Center, the Salmon River Valley Chamber of Commerce, and other filed their opening briefs yesterday in a lawsuit that pits Pacific Northwest salmon and steelhead interests against a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposal to increase power marketing to southern California.

The lawsuit is the most recent round in a series of conflicts over the allocation of the Columbia and Snake rivers' waters between power and fish. "Although many people have seen the adult fish ladders for salmon and steelhead at Bonneville Dam, fewer people appreciate the obstacles the dams present to young salmon and steelhead (smolts) moving downriver to the ocean," said Tim Wapato, Executive Director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Unless diverted away from the dams' turbines, juvenile salmon and steelhead may suffer extremely high mortalities (in the range of 70 to 90 percent) after passing eight dams.

The lawsuit was filed due to concerns over the availability of water to be spilled at the dams. "Spilling water is about the only way to keep fish out of the turbines at dams, such as Lower Monumental and Priest Rapids, without juvenile fish bypass systems," said Thatcher, the Wildlife Federation attorney. BPA's proposal would ex-

pand the capacity of transmission lines to the Los Angeles area by about 1100 megawatts. (This is roughly comparable to base-load requirements of the city of Seattle.) "The added capacity means that much more competition for water at the dams — and thus less spill for juvenile fish," Thatcher said.

The lawsuit challenges BPA's decision to proceed with the transmission expansion without preparing an environmental impact statement. "BPA is in an aggressive market expansion program, due to present electrical power surpluses and the market they are targeting — and the reason for the transmission line — is in California, Arizona, and southern Nevada," said Thatcher. "Fewer than ten years ago, however, BPA was forecasting power shortages."

"Each year for at least the past decade, Indian tribes and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies have sat down with the Bonneville Power Administration and the Corps of Engineers to develop juvenile salmon and steelhead passage plans," said Wapato. "The fisheries interests, however, have yet to get agreement from BPA and the Corps on the amount of water to be spilled for fish protection. Mechanical bypass systems would solve some of this problem, yet not all the dams have them. Lower Monumental, Ice Harbor, and The Dalles dam, for example, are not equipped with those devices, so spilling large volumes of water is essential at these dams. More power sales to California mean less water for salmon and steelhead survival."

Indian Cultural Festival At Fair

An Indian cultural festival and pow wow, to be held at the Oregon State Fair August 28 through September 7, 1987 in Salem, is being planned by the Commission on Indian Services. The event is the result of a year's long debate by CIS members, who sought a vehicle to demonstrate the American Indian contribution to Oregon. The festival was regarded by members as an excellent means of communicating to the general public that Indians, their communities, governments, and organizations are vital contributors to the social, cultural, and economic diversity of Oregon.

An all-Indian steering committee, composed of Salem and Portland individuals, plus representatives from eight Oregon tribes, has been appointed. The committee is co-chaired by former CIS member Merle Holmes (Grand Ronde). Kathy Gorospe of CIS is ex-officio co-chair. Numerous public and private institutions have enthusiastically pledged their support. This ambitious project requires the dedication and commitment of many people throughout the state. If you have questions or wish to volunteer, you are encouraged to contact Merle Holmes at 585-4568 or CIS staff at 378-5481.

Mid-Year Conference

"We, the Original People: A Bill of Treaty Rights and Indian Justice" is the theme for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Mid-Year Conference, June 24-26 in Portland, OR, and the 44th Annual NCAI Convention, September 21-25 in Tampa, Florida. NCAI is asking Indian and Native people to submit written and visual conceptions of an Indian Bill of Rights, depicting either the modern time or the time of the signing of the United States Constitution 200 years ago. Submissions and inquiries should be sent to NCAI at 804 D Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

The 1987 Mid-Year Conference will be held at the Red Lion Inn — Lloyd Center, and is timed to coincide with the June 25 Treaty Day Celebration of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation. June 25 also marks the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

The 44th Annual NCAI Convention will begin four days after the official commemoration of the signing of the Constitution on September 17. NCAI plans a special symposium and art exhibit to mark Indian contributions to the founding documents and concepts of the United States.

The signature art for the Convention program and poster will be selected from work submitted by artists who are citizens of Indian nations in the Southeastern and Northeastern NCAI Areas. A \$300 honorarium will be awarded to the artist selected for the signature piece.

Northwest Indian Nursing Summer Enrichment Program

The Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board is now taking applications for their 1987 NW Indian Nursing Recruitment Program's six-week Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). The program will once again be held at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington from August 1 to September 12, 1987. Ten slots are available. Applicants must be Indian, reside in Oregon, Idaho, or Washington, and be accepted at a college in Oregon, Idaho or Washington. Applicants will be judged on academic performance, knowledge of current Indian health issues and commitment to the improvement of Indian health, and letters of recommendation.

The NW Indian Nursing Recruitment Program provides for transportation to and from the training site, room and board, instructional fees and supplies and a small stipend for living expenses.

The students will be involved in an intense six-week program of academics, nursing skills, and career exploration that is designed to prepare them for the rigors of nursing education. The highlight of the SEP are the preceptorships. Each student spends one day per week with a nurse in a hospital, clinic, or private practice setting. Last year, all but one of the students were able to view the birth of a baby!

Prospective students may write to Tina Baldomaro, Secretary, NW Indian Nursing Recruitment Program, 123 NW 2nd Ave., Suite 321, Portland, Oregon 97209 or call (503) 228-4185 for application packets. Completed application packets are due back no later than May 31, 1987. Selection of 10 candidates and 5 alternates will be made June 3. They will be notified June 5.