

ATNWI in Arlee, MT.

Few show for annual meeting in Indian Country

Representatives from 18 or so tribes from the North West, traveled to Arlee, Montana to attend the annual meeting of Affiliated Tribes of North West Indians. Attendance was down this year due to conflicting meetings elsewhere.

Highlight of this year's meeting was a visit by Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs Ken Smith. Smith arrived looking very much the busy man he is, being escorted by the Billings area director and the Billings superintendent.

Smith's speech follows:

"I almost feel like I am home; again.

All the familiar faces out there quickly remind me of the times I was out there and I was on your side.

No—I haven't changed sides. I am still on your side. It's just that my bosses have changed.

In fact, if I promise you anything today, it's because I am ad libbing—it is sure not written into my remarks!

One of the reasons I wanted to make the effort to get up here to your meeting was because I thought it would really feel good to be with a group of tribes that come from a special part of the country—the Northwest, where the land is so productive that there are no budget worries, where there is plenty of water because it rains all the time, and where there is even a fish now and then.

More seriously though, when I took a look at my schedule for today it was a welcome relief from yesterday's. Starting with a 7 a.m. breakfast, my staff had me booked solidly—hour-by-hour—into the night last night. Between talking to BIA employees—the media—the National Tribal Chairmen's Association—it was a full day.

I want to focus my comments today as I did yesterday with NTCA on the challenge to tribes to achieve self-determination. But I will take a few minutes first to talk about why I took the job as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs—how I plan to operate—some ideas I am

working on—and the challenges and the new directions I see for myself and for the Bureau.

There are many factors. First, it is hard to turn down the President of our country. It was an honor for me and for my tribe; THAT certainly was a factor. My primary reason, however, for leaving the pleasant situation I had at Warm Springs to come to Washington DC was this: **I thought I could do certain things in this job that would be truly helpful to the Indian tribes of the United States.**

I was asked to take this job because I was a manager with a record of success in the development and administration of tribal programs and enterprises.

Most of you, I think, would agree that the Bureau of Indian Affairs needs improved management. It also needs to work more closely with Indian tribes to help them develop their resources and achieve economic self sufficiency.

My first challenge—and it will also be my first direction—is to give the BIA the kind of competent management that will enable it to more effectively work with the Indian tribes it serves.

I do not intend to put the BIA and the Indian people through another reorganization exercise. I am not interested in playing games with charts and titles. Sure, I will probably make some organizational changes, but my real concern is to get quality people and give them the chance to work with, but we are nonetheless, going to step up productivity and effectiveness.

I intend, for the time being at least, to work with two deputies. Roy Sampsel, who many of you know, is my deputy for operations handling most of the former Commissioner's responsibilities. He is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the BIA.

My basic management method or approach to getting things done will be management by objectives. It's not original or unusual. It's

commonsense. You set goals to be achieved. Then you determine the steps that will take you to your goals; you assign responsibility and a deadline for each of these steps. People know what they are supposed to do and how much time they have. The manager works with his staff or his team to keep these steps or objectives on schedule—and the result is inevitable. Things get done and goals are reached.

Some of the goals I have set for myself and for the Bureau of Indian Affairs are:

- 1) As trustee, to provide for the protection and improved management of American Indian natural resources.
- 2) To help create greater opportunity for tribes to develop their reservations economies.
- 3) To encourage and support the strengthening of tribal government structures and tribal management capacities.
- 4) To improve education and social programs on the reservations by giving the tribes greater authority in the managerial process, and
- 5) To make the BIA a more effective service organization through the use of sound management concepts and practices.

I will be working with all the BIA area directors and agency superintendents for the realization of these goals. I am sure that the area directors and the superintendents, in their turn, will be working with you at the local level to determine the steps or objectives necessary to achieve these goals.

There is one substantial organization change that we are considering — though we are nowhere near making any decision. It is the consolidation of some of the area offices. We may have to reduce the number of area offices to achieve administrative cost reductions in the Bureau. **I want it understood very clearly that we have made no decisions in this matter.** I also think the area offices have important mid-level management functions. I would hate to try to operate with 84 or more agencies reporting directly to Washington. The bottom line, however, is that area offices are vulnerable when budget cuts must be made. If we do have to reduce the number of area offices, you can be sure you will be informed and consulted.

I want you to know also I am working toward improved coordination of all Federal programs for Indian tribes. The

situation that has existed in the past—with each department or agency doing its own thing on the reservations—has been obviously wasteful and inefficient.

I discussed this matter—and the need for a national Indian policy statement for this Administration—with Secretary Watt. The Secretary, for several weeks now, has worked quietly with the White House and has succeeded in elevating the issue of an Indian policy statement to the Cabinet Council level—only one step away from the Presidential decision level.

Just last week, I was named Chairman of the working group that will be responsible for developing an Indian policy for this Administration. This working group is a sub-unit of the Cabinet Council on Human Resources, chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Representatives of five other departments having Indian programs will be on this working group and Robert Carleson, special assistant to the President for policy development, will be the principal White House Representative.

I believe this development alone, re-emphasizes Secretary Watt's desire—and that of President Regan—to keep Indians in the mainstream of our society during this Administration.

At my confirmation hearing some weeks ago before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, I told members of the Committee some of my beliefs and my philosophy about Indian people and Indian self-determination. I would like to address these same statements to you. I think they might provide some useful groundwork for further thinking about this convention's theme and about the challenge of the 80's for tribal government—achieving true self determination and self sufficiency.

I told the members of the Senate committee:

* I believe in the strengths of Indian people which have enabled them to endure—through times of adversity and oppression unparalleled in history. (I am sure that you believe in that strength too. The Indian people are not weak! They can and they will meet the challenges of the present time.)

* I believe Indian people have the will and the ability to self-govern and exercise wisely their sovereign powers within the framework of the Federal-

tribal relationship.

* I believe that the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of Indian people and their tribal governments must come from within—from their own will and determination.

* I believe Indian people and their tribal governments—not the Federal Government—have the prime responsibility for improvement of their social and economic growth and development.

* I believe the proper role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other Federal Agencies, is to encourage and foster an atmosphere that will enable tribal government to move toward less dependency on the Federal Government.

* I believe the goal of moving tribes away from dependence on the Federal government is in complete accord with the existing government-to-government relationship and does not in any manner diminish or alter the Federal trust responsibility.

* And finally, I believe the government and trust relationships will be more meaningful when tribal governments are strong and stable and less dependent on Federal funds.

I realize that it is frequently easier to talk about beliefs and philosophy than it is to apply them to specific concrete situations. For example, I know that all of you are concerned about the budget reductions for Indian programs. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal governments are going to have to make some hard decisions. We must do these things knowing that less dependency on the federal government is desirable and is a goal that Indian tribes should seek.

I think the Indian tribes can find ways to use their resources more effectively and to solve their problems. The successful efforts of many of the tribes that belong to this organization certainly demonstrated that point. It also seems to me that a substantial amount of the federal funding in the past has not been truly helpful. Money has been wasted in programs that were not thought out well, not integrated into any reservation plan and, consequently, had no lasting effect.

The tribal governments now are challenged to come up with better ideas, better planning and better management. Their enterprises and development

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TOE NESS

There was this guy who was making his first parachute jump. As he was going down he saw this other guy going up. He shouted to the guy, "Do you know anything about parachuting?" The guy going up said, "No, do you know anything about Coleman stoves?" YIKES!!!

SS SS SS SS

There are three ways to do things—the right way, the wrong way and the BIA way." YIKES!!!

SS SS SS SS

CONFUCIUS SAY: "Honeymoon over when husband start look into paper instead of her eyes! YIKES!!!

SS SS SS SS

A father was telling a friend how he finally cured his 17 year-old son of habitually being late to school: "I bought him a car." "But how did that help?" "Well," replied the father, "he has to get going an hour earlier to find a place in the school parking lot." YIKES

SS SS SS SS

Dave: "Boy, oh boy! Did I catch a fish! It was tremendous! Why, it was that long! I never saw such a fish!" Jack: "I believe you." YIKES

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