

Special NCAI Insert

SPILYAY TYMOO (Coyote News)

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Nations Capitol

NCAI Executive Council meeting in Washington D.C.

The N.C.A.I. Executive Council held a meeting in the International Hotel in Washington, D.C. January 25-28. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss tribal concerns throughout Indian country to be viewed and acted on by the 98th Congress.

Interior Secretary James Watt's address to the Tribal leaders on the 25th made a mark of excellence to some and to others it cut the wound a bit deeper. Issues arising from all the attention by brought Watt through the news media and TV interviews concerning Indian reservation conditions were of prime interest.

Watt's remarks about Indians, as reported by the news media, caused frustration and anger among Indian

leaders across the country. "If you want an example of failures of socialism, don't go to Russia; come to the United States and go to the Indian reservations." (This was taken out of context.)

Taking a statement up to that point which was half of a paragraph, could lead in any direction and it did. In Watt's address to the Executive Council on January 25, he said, "I have worked for two years with this same message, and because of unprofessional press conduct it was blown out of shape, lied about, but one thing it did do--it got attention!"

In other issues the Tribal Regional water prioritization meeting was held Thursday the 27th. During the daylong meeting, concerns were

discussed on water issues facing the Indians on regional bases as well as at the national level.

On the same day some members attended a meeting with the Indian Health Service which was held in Rockville, Maryland. Delegates had the opportunity to meet with the Indian Health Service and the Department of Human Services regarding current issues with the I.H.S.

The Indian Policy Statement attracted much attention among the Tribal leaders who were in attendance at the four day meeting. (See next 2 pages for full text.) Joe DeLaCruz, the Chairman of the NCAI said, "Some Indian leaders from across the country are not focusing their attention on the main issues of Indian

problems. They see only what's at the surface and are overlooking the base from which the problems stem.

The message was delivered and the Indian leaders must assert themselves and create a better and more constructive working relationship with Congress, and overlook the small problems they see today.

The Indian Policy statement should be addressed by Indian leaders as a working tool. They should be focusing their attention more to the root of the problems and use the working tool to solve all the problems and also be looking into the future.

The PHS is a branch of its own just like the BIA, and it is handled in the same manner only they are not brought into

public view as the BIA. There are several loops Indian people have to face with PHS as things tend to go from one desk to another and right on down the line.

There needs to be a change in procedures and methods in dealing with Congress. Everything is there. All our Indian leaders have to do is pick it up and move forward in a diplomatic and a more constructive way," he concluded.

Local delegates had a very constructive week presenting issues to the top officials for consideration in areas of Education, Health, Employment, Natural Resources and other programs and all showed favorable reaction from all officials in each of these areas.

by Sid Miller