

# Timbermen hear woes of industry

The seventh annual National Indian Timber Symposium held in Missoula, Montana was, to say in the least, a bit unsettling as far as good news, bad news goes. The good news was that the 75 percent increase in housing starts has revived the timber industry. The bad news was that the timber industry, especially timber tribes, must not depend solely on this upswing because it may only be temporary. Tribes must diversify and seek other markets.

Over 100 tribal representatives and forestry personnel attended the symposium. Speaking for the Department of the Interior, Wayne Chattin encouraged strong tribal governments and less federal dependency. Due to budget cutbacks, Indian tribes, he said, are realizing that more involvement in the outside sector is necessary. "We are all conscious of our trust responsibility...we are carefully designing the best avenues possible to enhance the resources."

Chattin announced that Solicitor General William Coldiron reversed his 10 percent forestry administrative fee opinion issued May 5, 1982. He stated in the 1982 opinion that the Secretary of the Interior did not have the discretion to waive payment of a fee on timber sales in return for the tribes reinvesting those funds in specific forest-related activities. The reversal stated that the Secretary does, in fact, have the authority to reduce the administrative fee put into the U.S. Treasury. This reversal, said Chattin, is a "victory for all" in Indian forestry.

However, others were hesitant about the reversal being a real "victory." Chief BIA forester George Smith cautioned the tribes, saying the 10 percent monies issue has been a real struggle for the Bureau and that Coldiron's reversal is a "good ending to a fairly bad story." But because the Secretary's discretion could be in favor of either the government or the tribes, the "issue is not completely a rest."

Warm Springs tribal attorney Dennis Karnopp also commented on the reversal, saying, "We can be happy that we won, but don't think we've won altogether. Another administration could change the policy."

Chattin named the two most important endeavors the BIA is currently pursuing. One is economic development on reservations. Small tribes will be involved in economic development programs and applications for this seed money are currently being accepted and reviewed. The amount of seed money has been doubled in the proposed 1984 Interior budget.

The second endeavor, said Chattin, is the enforcement of the President's Indian Policy with emphasis on government-to-government relationship. The policy, he said, "does not reflect a change in the day-to-



Spliyay Tymoo photo by Behrend

**Warm Springs Tribal Council members and others met briefly with Senator Mark Hatfield—an advocate for Indian Issues.**

day life on the reservations, but it will have a long-range impact."

Chattin commended the tribes for their involvement and input in testimonies concerning the budget. He encouraged the tribes to continue this endeavor, saying such testimony has great influence in Washington.

Stanley Bishoprick of Washougal Exterior Woods Products commented on the wood products industry trend. "The current trend is a result of enough people taking advantage of an opportunity." Significant factors that will shape the economy in the future are the changes in the world and domestic markets and the population shift from west coast to east coast.

Housing needs will change, he said. There will be more multiple-family dwellings, homes will be more energy-efficient, wood will replace concrete for home foundations. "Thus, there will be more influence on treated wood." Also, people will be remodeling their existing homes rather than building new ones.

Bishoprick also felt that foreign countries will be in need of U.S. wood in the future. "Foreign forest will be depleted in about 10 years—foreign markets will be going elsewhere to get their orders filled—countries such as the United States, Canada, South America and Russia."

In order to "best develop ourselves to take advantage of the future trade, we must analyze our own resources, look at the opportunities world-wide and try to move in the direction that will take advantage of trends," said Bishoprick.

Guy McMinds, director of Quinault natural resources commented that if the "Indian forest is to survive, it has to depend on Indian business

opportunities." He suggested that it is the tribal government's job to serve as mediator of change from traditional ways to more modern ways of doing business. "We have to examine ways of Indian forest management versus non-Indian forest management. We must examine the transitional process we're all involved in. We have to change at a pace that people can adjust to."

Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield was featured speaker at the symposium. The Indian timber issue, Hatfield said, is important and its importance is growing. That importance is dependent on the national economy. "Many financial opportunities will probably be influenced more by national pressures rather than tribal pressures."

Hatfield spoke of the national deficit—\$197 billion in the proposed 1984 budget. This deficit will effect the "so-

called recovery." As the federal government goes into the money market, it pre-empt the savings pool—next year by an estimated 79 percent. As this occurs, the interest rate rises. "We need to narrow the deficit."

Unemployment is also a factor in the recovery. There are encouraging signs—unemployment is down to 10.3 percent on a national level. "Unemployment among Indians," said Hatfield, "is scandalous. It is up to 30 to 40 percent on some reservations."

The jobs bill, that was introduced by Hatfield, is "all-inclusive," he said. "When the bill was created...it was not just for public works...we targeted some of the money into long-term unemployment areas." \$150 million has been earmarked for Indian programs to stimulate employment in the areas of irrigation, health, water and



Spliyay Tymoo photo by Miller

**Senator Mark Hatfield: "There is a stark difference between a helping hand and a handout."**

sewer, home repair, block grants, school improvements, natural resources, site restoration. "Indian programs have often been lost. Not so with the jobs bill," he said.

With the defense department one of the few areas with an increase in 1984, Hatfield jokingly suggested that perhaps the Department of the Interior should transfer over. They probably spend more on paper clips in a year, he said, than the Interior Department needs for its entire operating budget.

Hatfield agreed with George Smith and Dennis Karnopp on the 10 percent monies issue. "We're not out of the woods yet with the Solicitor's opinion. Though we have some breathing time, I'm concerned about total authority being vested into the hands of the Secretary of the Interior. Together, we have to remain very alert to the problem that still confronts us." Hatfield suggested that some legislative action be introduced to abdicate that authority of the Secretary.

Hatfield recommended to the group that Indian forest management plans be upgraded. "Much more can be done," he said. "The federal government doesn't have total responsibility," to upgrade the forests. "Financially-sound tribes should put more back in (over 10 percent) on their own."

"In the long-run, if you're going to survive, a solid, adequate base of funding for forest management is necessary."

Hatfield also said that the government must "walk along side of the tribes. There is a stark difference between a helping hand and a hand-out."

Hatfield concluded his remarks by stating that "we have to develop a sound viable economic base to be self-reliant. Through this, we can realize the dreams of the tribes."

Four panels, discussing the timber administrative deduction and cooperative agreements, taxation, financial management of timber resources and forest watershed and water rights, were conducted. Out of these panels came four workshops and out of the workshops came recommendations, findings and conclusions.

The recommendations were many and varied, ranging from support of the Intertribal Timber Council for those tribes seeking quantification of their water rights, to improved timber appraisal mechanisms, to the head area forester working with BIA and the tribes in avoiding extraordinary administrative requirements and broaden the program scope to reflect a major forestry effort and long-range plans.

The recommendations will be further discussed by the Intertribal Timber Council in June before being presented to the Department of the Interior.