

Statement of John A. Carver, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Public Land Management, before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, February 6, 1963. (Briefing sessions on Public Land Management Bureaus -- Bureau of Indian Affairs)

### Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Chairman and I shared the platform at the most recent convention of the National Congress of American Indians, one of many organizations maintaining surveillance -- sometimes friendly, sometimes critical -- over the activities of the Department in the Indian field.

I prefaced my remarks by quoting from various annual reports of the Secretary of the Interior in the decade from 1870 to 1880, about how much "progress" was being made in Indian affairs, and how with just a little more money from the Congress this aspect of government activity could be quite promptly closed out.

This sort of thing makes one a little chary of the word "progress", if not downright chary of the subject of Indian Affairs itself.

There is little quarrel with the basic objectives of federal activity -- health services of top quality (a responsibility transferred from Interior to HEW some years ago); education, where we face the same problems that harassed state legislatures face the country over of keeping up with rising costs and rising school population; economic development, not only assistance in bringing industrial activity to reservations, but training and retraining, opening up resources by construction of roads, encouraging the channeling of tribal judgment funds to tribal enterprise, and the like; and government itself, meaning law and order, procedural protection for basic civil rights, and better relations with state, county and municipal governments.

Implementation is a different question. A high percentage of the public laws, almost a third, enacted by the 87th Congress affecting programs of the Interior Department were in the Indian area. Congress has plenary power in this area, under the Constitution, and this Committee considers hundreds of different ideas on how any given Indian problem should be resolved.

#### a. Alaska

The Secretary mentioned Alaska native land problems, and the heirship problem. The former has been a particularly sensitive one for me, for the controversy too frequently has been cast in terms of conflict between