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ARROSTOOK

INDIAN

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URBAN INDIAN MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND VIRGINIA

On December 14, 15, 16, the AAI was represented by Mr. Tom Battiste and Mr. Terry Polchies at an Urban Indian conference sponsored by the National Council on Indian Opportunity and the Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare. This conference in Warrenton, Virginia was to make recommendations to the National Council on Indian Opportunity for the urban Indians. The theme for this conference was set by President Nixon's July 8th message to the 91st Congress of which he said: Our new census will probably show that a larger proportion of America's Indians are living off the reservation than ever before in our history. Some authorities even estimate that more Indians are living in cities and towns than are remaining on the reservation. Of those American Indians who are now dwelling in urban areas, approximately three-fourths are living in poverty.

The BIA is organized to serve the 462,000 reservation Indians. The BIA's responsibility does not extend to Indians who have left the reservation, but this point is not always clearly understood. As a result of this misconception, Indians living in urban areas have often lost out on the opportunity to participate in other programs designed for disadvantaged groups. As a first step toward helping the urban Indians, I am instructing

appropriate officials to do all they can to ensure that this misunderstanding is corrected.

But misunderstandings are not the most important problems confronting urban Indians. The biggest barrier faced by those Federal, State and local programs which are trying to serve urban Indians is the difficulty of locating and identifying them. Lost in the anonymity of the city, often cut off from family and friends, many urban Indians are slow to establish new community ties. Many drift from neighborhood to neighborhood; many shuttle back and forth between reservations and urban areas. Language and cultural differences compound these problems. As a result, Federal, State and local programs which are designed to help such persons often miss this most deprived and least understood segment of the urban poverty population.

This Administration is already taking steps which will help remedy this situation. In a joint effort, the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare will expand support to a total of seven urban Indian centers in major cities which will act as links between existing Federal, State and local service programs and the Urban Indians. The Departments of Labor, Housing and Urban Development and Commerce have pledged to cooperate with such experimental urban centers and the BIA has expressed its willingness to contact with these centers for the performance

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of relocation services which assist reservation Indians in their transition to urban employment.

These efforts represent an important beginning in recognizing and alleviating the severe problems faced by urban Indians. We hope to learn a great deal from these projects and to expand our efforts as rapidly as possible. I am directing the Office of Economic Opportunity to lead those efforts."

At the conference there were workshops in education, alcoholism and drugs, economic development, contracts and proposals, Indian centers, employment, congressional and political affairs, aboriginal treaty rights, and housing.

We were in the housing workshop and the following recommendations were submitted:

1. N.C.I.O. should circulate a fact sheet on HUD programs applicable to Indians, and a list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of all HUD regional and area offices.

2. N.C.I.O. should request representation for the urban, reservation and the off-reservation Indians on all federal and state housing committees, commissions and task forces.

3. N.C.I.O. should immediately hire a full-time N.C.I.O. Staff housing specialist to develop increased Indian housing at the local level. The first action of this staff member shall be to develop and promote a program, to train and place regional housing specialist to develop more Indian housing at the local level.

These specialists, who will be Indians, shall reside in the local areas.

4. To make funds available for Indian housing, a task force shall be designated to draw up proposals, budgets, and plans for a 10-year program which can be submitted to Congress in the form of a bill for American Indian housing.

This conference was a significant step for the AAI. First of all it shows the Federal government does recognize the fact that we do have the same problems as the rest of the Indians in the United States

Also, it shows that the Federal government does recognize the Urban Indians and that there are programs that are available for all off-reservation Indians. It is now the responsibility of the Federal government to follow up these recommendations which were submitted during this conference.

By Tom Battiste

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AAI BUYS TWO CARS

The Association of Aroostook Indians, Inc. would like to express its sincere thanks to the Maine Indian Partnership Committee. Through the efforts of the Partnership, the AAI was able to purchase two cars from the New England Telephone Company. We hope that these vehicles will help to solve some of our transportation problems.

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NOTES FROM THE AAI MEETING ON DEC. 20, 1970

The meeting began approximately 2:20 P. M. with Terry Polchies, president of the AAI, presiding. There were twenty-one members present.

Terry introduced the guest, Greg Buesing, who is associated with the Diocesan Bureau of Human Relations Services in Bangor, Maine. He explained his purpose for being here, which was to explain about the anonymous donor who wanted to give \$6,000 to an organization such as ours, and also to the three other reserves in Maine. Mr. Buesing discussed this in length. Mr. Battiste asked the question if there would be any strings attached in order to receive this money. The only specification was that it had to be used for a specific purpose, such as setting up programs that would benefit all the people in the AAI, and also that these programs or whatever the AAI decides to do with the money would continue to function long after they have been established. The money would have to be used within a one-year period. Tom Battiste made a motion that we should accept the \$6,000 and Shirley Lefvasseur seconded the motion. Later, the motion was withdrawn.

(cont'd on p. 5, column 1)

ONCE WE WERE BROTHERS

Francis Joseph Neptune, Hero of the
Battle of Machias by Jean Hildebrand
and Gregory Busesing

EDITOR'S NOTE: Once We Were Brothers
is distributed by the Division of Indian
Services, Human Relations Services,
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland as
part of an effort to improve Indian-white
relations by relating the true history
of the four tribes of the ancient Wabanaki
Confederacy (the Passamaquoddies, Penob-
scots, Maliseets and Micmacs) 2000 of whom
still remain in Maine.

Early in the morning of the 14th of Au-
gust, 1777, under the cover of heavy fog, Brit-
ish Marines landed at the mouth of the Machias
River, the easternmost outpost of Washington's
army. By noon British barges had towed a brig
and sloop-o-war up river to the town; and it
was clear that when their guns were brought to
bear, Machias would fall or be destroyed.

Meanwhile, soldiers moved up both banks, burn-
ing buldings as they went. Col. Allan, the
post commander, had deployed his 180 troops in
defensive positions, but must have feared
disaster under the guns of the British vessels.

About one-third of the force defending
Machias were Maliseet and Passamaquoddy Indians.

Impatient and no doubt more than a little
fearful themselves, the Indians raised an
unnerving war cry. Then the son of the Pass-
amaquoddy chief, a young man named Francis
Joseph Neptune, stepped forward and aimed his
musket at a British officer in a boat said to
be 700 yards off shore. To an ordinary man,
such a shot would have been impossible, but
Francis Joseph was a shaman, gifted with
extraordinary powers. When the officer fell
in view of all the defenders, Allan's troops,
Indians and whites alike, were fired with zeal.
The whites joined the Indian war cry.

The British Marines were routed; the
sailors were forced below deck; and, when the
tide turned, the British vessels made for the
open sea without firing a shot at Machias, which
remained in revolutionary hands from that day
onward.

A year later, after his father's death,
Francis Joseph Neptune became chief of the
Passamaquoddies. In 1794 he was the principle
signer of the treaty his people made with the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1822 he
helped bring about the introduction of public
education in his tribe with funds from the
United States Department of War. He died in
1834; but the story of his wonderful shot and
how he saved Machias is still known and told
by his grandchildren's grandchildren.

FIELDS

Grass covered, sun drenched fields.
 Lush green grass and dandelions and fiddle-
 heads for Indians;
 A May flower and its pink bud for Indians;
 Wild strawberries and blueberries for Indians;
 Wild animals eat wild fruits and berries;
 Animals leave a few for Indians;
 Roll away, roll away barrels;
 The work is all done.
 Go away, go away Indians.
 Snow-covered, sun drenched fields,
 Snow-covered sun drenched potato fields.

Submitted by:
 Mrs. Tilly West of Ashland, Maine

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WANTED: ARTICLES FOR AROOSTOOK INDIAN

If you have any comments (criticisms, or otherwise), old Indian tales or legends, recipes, poems, cartoons, current news, or any other news items that you would like to see printed in the AROOSTOOK INDIAN, write them down and send them to P. O. Box 223, Houlton, Maine, 04730. We want to hear from all the Indians in Aroostook County and the rest of Maine.

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BETTER RED - THAN DEAD

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There are some Indians they say
 Part of the earth we've paved
 Now who would so respect a stone
 As to leave it alone
 wherever it lay
 Even if in the way -

There are some Indians they say
 Part of the weeds we spray
 Now who would apologize to a carrot
 that hunger demanded they tear it
 up, and would then hear -a groan
 of the earth to be so disowned
 of even so small
 a part of the all -

There are some Indians they say
 part of the earth here where one day
 now we'll be part of,
 to too late learn love
 of what we are.
 Too far
 gone from the meridians
 of respect that the Indians
 knew -

Who
 has understood when their car
 blessed asphalt and tar
 and was blessed in return?

I have learned
 there are some Indians they say

part of the earth when the earth
 (cont'd on p. 5, column 2)

(cont'd from p. 2)

Tom Battiste and Terry Polchies gave a report on their trip to Washington, D.C. and Virginia Urban Indian meeting. It was a significant step for the AAI to be invited to this meeting because now, even though we still are not recognized officially by the state or federal government, they know that we do exist up here in northern Maine. The purpose of the meeting was to have urban Indian leaders from all over the country together here so that they may be able to let the people in Washington know what the needs are for the urban Indian.

The consultant to the AAI explained at length the service that is available through the American Friends Service Committee, which in turn will go through the Diocesan Bureau of Human Relations Services in Bangor, Maine. The A.F.S.C. will employ a Coordinator to work with the AAI for one year at \$6,000. The members voted and the majority agreed to accept this service. Whoever is interested in this service, should contact the AAI.

Terry explained at length his Ford Leadership Development grant.

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Video tapes of the White Roots of Peace at the University of Maine were shown to the members.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P. M.

Submitted by:
Frank Polchies, Secretary
Association of Arrostook Indians

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(cont'd from p. 4)

would play

and dancers

would answer:

There are some Indians they say

who once passed this way.

Reprinted from AKWASASNE NOTES

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