

*Gen Sp: Feb 2
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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

February 2, 1967

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT
FROM: NEAL PETERSON

cc: Bill Welsh
cc: Norman Sherman

Attached is a statement of five paragraphs which you may wish to make to the presiding officers of the Indian tribes.

Also - the final list of those present.

The main purpose of this meeting is just to have these people meet you and to take several pictures. Since there are 66 of these people, we will probably have to break them into about four groups.

STATEMENT OF VICE PRESIDENT
TO CONFERENCE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY 2, 1967

I understand that you are here to discuss a draft of a bill which is intended to provide you with various alternatives for developing your reservations. It is fitting that you, our first Americans, should be here in the Capital of our nation engaging in serious and frank discussions about your future.

The President and I want new and daring efforts to be made so that the resources of this country--Federal, State and private--can be mobilized for an all-out attack on Indian poverty. Your leadership in helping plan this attack is necessary to its success. This may mean taking a chance now and then, and maybe even risking a little, to achieve final victory over the ravages of disease, ignorance and poverty which blight your lives.

As Chairman of the President's Economic Opportunity Council, I have instructed the several agencies and departments of our Government to coordinate their efforts at all levels--national, regional and local--so that neither time nor effort is lost in meeting this challenge. I know that you feel as I do that the problems of your people demand our immediate attention. Your being here reflects your deep concern about your folks back home.

This reminds me that back home in my own state, we have several thousand Indians--many living right in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul--whose future is involved in the meetings you are having. At the regional meeting last fall in Minneapolis you selected Mr. Roger Jourdain, Chairman of the Red Lake Tribal Council and my friend of many years, to be your chairman. I am happy to see him here today in a position of leadership at the national level. I notice also that Mr. Peter Dufault, Chairman of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe of the northern part of my state is here also contributing to this effort.

It seems to me that your being here to discuss plans for legislation with your Government before it goes to the Congress marks the beginning of a new era in Federal-Indian relations. It should have started a long time ago. Now that it has started, I am confident that you and your Government cooperatively can develop opportunities for your people by which they can share in the great bounty of this nation. I wish you success and pledge my support.



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