

TO: Bill C.
FROM: Ursula

OK

Press release on Nat. Council on Indian
Opportunity for your approval.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY WILL OFFICIALLY OPEN THE FIRST PUBLIC FORUM ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE URBAN INDIAN IN AMERICA IN LOS ANGELES, MONDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 1:00 P. M. IN THE FEDERAL COURT BUILDING.

THE FORUM, FIRST OF TEN TO BE HELD BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDIAN OPPORTUNITY, WILL EXAMINE PROBLEMS OF THE URBAN INDIAN IN SUCH AREAS AS EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND JUSTICE. THE VICE PRESIDENT, PERMANENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL, REQUESTED THE STUDY AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL AND ASSIGNED THE TASK TO A COMMITTEE HEADED BY COUNCIL MEMBER, MRS. LADONNA HARRIS. MRS. HARRIS WILL CONDUCT THIS FORUM AFTER OPENING REMARKS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT AND IS IN CHARGE OF THE SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.

MR. HUMPHREY IS EXPECTED TO OPEN THE MEETING WITH REMARKS CALLING FOR INCREASED UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF ALL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES TO THE NEEDS OF INDIAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THE RESERVATION.

THE TWO DAY FORUM, ENDING TUESDAY, IS EXPECTED TO DRAW A BROAD CROSS SECTION FROM THE INDIAN COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL AGENCIES. THE HARRIS COMMITTEE WILL USE INFORMATION GAINED IN THE NATIONAL MEETINGS TO OFFER BROAD POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW AND IMPROVED FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE URBAN INDIAN.

SPEECH DRAFT
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDIAN OPPORTUNITY HEARINGS
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

In the closing days of 1968, it is apparent that this year has been one of the most significant in the field of Indian affairs our nation has ever experienced.

Indians have always maintained a high level of interest in their problems, but outside interest and important resources necessary to their solution have been missing. Many of these vital tools were supplied this year.

The formation of the National Council on Indian Opportunity provides a vital new tool. Recent years have seen the confusing growth of a score of new programs, each with a mission, but often overlapping others and working without the benefit of coordination. Thus, a constant concern of the Council must be the stimulation of opportunities for government administrators to plan together. That is a good step, but a first step. Of even greater significance is the realization that local priorities must determine program directions and that local people for whom the programs are intended must identify those priorities. For years we have paid lip service to that ideal, but only now are we moving realistically to make it work. The emphasis on locally controlled schools and hospitals urged in President Johnson's historic message to the Congress in March of this year illustrates this.

Through the Council, for the first time Indian leaders serve on an official Federal agency as peers and partners with Cabinet level officials. In the past they have been asked often for advice by government agencies, but this new relationship goes far beyond that. For example, you can rest assured that the findings and recommendations of this subcommittee on off-reservation affairs will be given wide and serious attention throughout the government. This is also true of the other subcommittees, headed by the Indian members of the Council, working on high priority program needs.

This year we saw more examples than ever before of local Indian communities administering their own programs under contracts with Federal agencies. There had been a beginning, but now there is real and rapid development in this area.

This year, both the President and members of Congress spoke most clearly against the tired, old notion of termination, which has hampered real cooperation for so long.

This year the Federal effort should top the \$500 million mark for the first time.

We could go on but this will illustrate the enormity of the challenge that we face. Many of these new directions are not yet well established. Without constant effort and dedication we can

easily loose the new focus on local self-determination and slip back into the old and sterile habit of developing programs for Indians and working on their behalf rather than with them. There is no reason why Indian leaders cannot build in the future on the foundation that exists. In a strong statement on Indians issued in September in Omaha, President Elect Nixon pledged his support to the National Council on Indian Opportunity and his commitment to the goal of Indian self-determination.

The new members of his Cabinet and the new members of the Congress will look to you for help. Let us give them the guidance and support they will need.

As we deliberate together, let us avoid the old, familiar pitfall of seeking a single perfect solution or a contrived and artificial agreement on all problems and solutions. The needs and circumstances of Indians are varied. We can make progress on many fronts without arraying one proposal over against another. Let us debate with vigor all legitimate differences. Let us not shirk our duty, so pressing now, of speaking out, but let us all stand together on the basic right of Indians everywhere to increased control over their own affairs and their basic right to dignity in dealing with their government and their neighbors.

I am pleased to be here at such an historic occasion. These hearings on off-reservation Indians will begin today, but they

will continue on across the nation in large and small communities for nearly a year. At long last we will shed public light on the forgotten segment of the forgotten American. Let us continue to work in other areas as well.



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