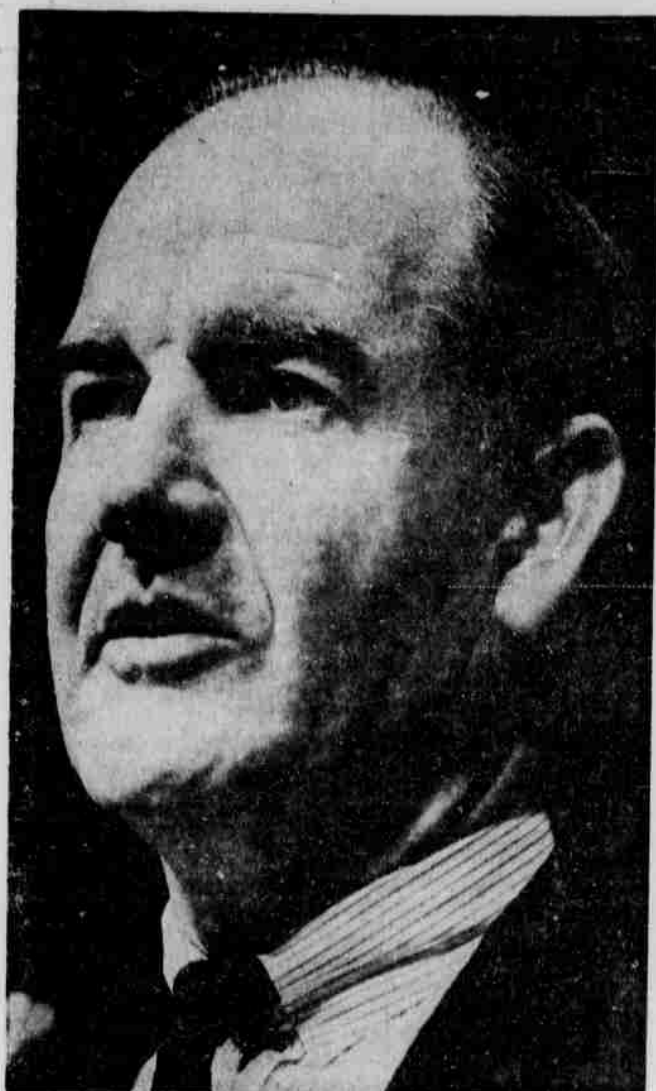


**"A loss of ethnic pride engendered by historical events, . . . an over-dependency on the U.S. government bureaucracy and a sense of powerlessness is the heritage of Indian youth."**

**—Pine Ridge Research Bulletin**

## McGovern: BIA needs vigor



Sen. George McGovern

Sen. George McGovern, D., S.D., has become nationally known as one of the nation's most outspoken social critics as well as being opposed to United States policy in Vietnam.

McGovern was thrust into national prominence during the 1968 Democratic Presidential race when he gathered the support of many of Sen. Robert Kennedy's primary delegates in a late blooming bid for the nomination as a "peace candidate."

After serving in President John F. Kennedy's administration as head of the Agency for International Development, McGovern was elected to the Senate in 1962. He was re-elected last November.

Most recently, McGovern has been engaged in a Senate probe of United States hunger pockets as chairman of the Senate hunger committee.

As chairman of the Senate subcommittee on Indian affairs, he has been an advocate of broad legislative reform to raise the standard of living of the American Indian. One basis of his concern is the fact that his home state of South Dakota contains the Pine Ridge Reservation, the second largest Indian reservation in America.

Jim Pedersen, Nebraskan staff writer, interviewed McGovern and asked him, first of all, his opinion of the federal government's controversial Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Daily Nebraskan** — Ralph Nader in an article in the New Republic, called the Bureau of Indian Affairs "organizational dry rot" and added that any administration attempting to solve the Indian problems would first have to deal with the BIA. What should be done about the BIA? Should all Indian affairs be placed under different cabinet departments?

**McGovern** — I wouldn't favor breaking up the BIA. It does need to be revitalized, however. We do need an agency to which we can give major responsibility of the Indian problem. To say that the BIA has fallen short of what it ought to do is not, in my judgment, to suggest that we ought to end the BIA. We ought to improve it. We shouldn't scrap it.

**Daily Nebraskan** — You stated that the BIA should be reformed or revitalized. Can you give any specific ideas that you might have?

**McGovern** — Right now I can't. I want to make it clear that I don't have any reorganization plan in mind. What I was suggesting is that there is need

for greater vigor in the BIA. There is a need for greater determination to deal with the problems of Indian people.

I am not singling out any one aspect or person of the Indian bureau for criticism, but I think that it is quite clear that we haven't made the progress that we should have in the past 75 years. Something needs to be done to put more energy and dedication into the BIA.

**Daily Nebraskan** — In his report on the American Indian, former President Lyndon Johnson created a National Council on Indian Affairs made up of six department heads and the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Did Johnson, in doing this, take a step towards dismantling the BIA or at least transferring authority to individual departments?

**McGovern** — I don't know what the President had in mind in making that move. But from what I could gather at the time, he was trying to draw in the services of other parts of the government to help with the Indian problem. I don't think that plan has worked out very well.

My own view of what we need is a clear national mandate in the Congress and in the executive to end the neglect of our Indian people. They are the most neglected minority in the country. There is no question about that. The poverty and disease, the bad housing and lack of job opportunities in the Indian community is worse than in any other minority group.

I would prefer that we would move along the lines of a resolution I sponsored in Congress which called for a broad effort by Congress and the executive to lift Indian standards of living all across the board. More job training and job opportunities, better education, better housing, industrial development, better health: a wide range of projects which could lift their whole standard of life.

I don't think you do this by abolishing the BIA or creating a council. You do it by developing sound programs in the Congress and then giving the BIA a clear mandate to carry them out.

I do think that Indian people need to be brought in on these programs. A program which does not involve self-help on the part of the Indians and some self-direction in helping to both structure the programs and administer them, won't work very well.

**Daily Nebraskan** — In his report on the Indian, Johnson asked for \$500 million for Indian affairs for fiscal 1969. Has this proven to be a sufficient amount of funds to handle some of the Indian problems?

**McGovern** — I don't really know if I am in a position to pass judgement on whether that is the proper amount or not. All I am saying is that we need to do enough to bring Indian educational, health and housing standards up to the level of the rest of the country. I am not prepared to give you any exact figures of what it would take to accomplish that.

**Daily Nebraskan** — There has been a bill introduced in the House to provide tax incentives for industrial development of Indian reservations. Is private enterprise in this form of industrial development the answer to eradicating the economic poverty and unemployment on the reservation?

**McGovern** — I think it is one answer, and I would favor proposals of that kind. I have introduced a measure on the Senate side which would provide special incentives for industry to locate in any sparsely populated area whether Indian areas or non-Indian areas.

But it would have the effect of benefiting the Indian because most of the Indians live in the sparsely populated areas of the country. I think this is a fine possibility and one which we should look at carefully. I am sympathetic to this approach.

**Daily Nebraskan** — What did you have in mind when you introduced a bill in the Senate to establish corporate entities for the economic development of Indian tribes?

**McGovern** — This was an administration bill which I co-sponsored which would make it easier for Indian tribes to operate their own business. It is designed to remove some of the bottlenecks which make it difficult for Indians to use funds they might have. This is for either tribal funds or funds which individuals might have for business development purposes.

**Daily Nebraskan** — In an editorial in Parent magazine Sen. Robert Kennedy said that education lies at the heart of the Indian problem. He said that much of the problem is that Indians have been taught implicitly and openly that their cultural difference from the white man meant cultural inferiority. Is this the real basis of the Indian problem? Is it something more than federal funds can make up for?

**McGovern** — That is a very crucial part of the Indian problem. There is a desperate need to upgrade the education of the Indians as well as other minority groups, but especially the Indian. I think that in my state, for example, a general improvement in education all across the board, not just in vocational training, but education for the pre-school child right on through to higher education is really a key factor in determining the future of the American Indian.

**Daily Nebraskan** — Nearly all the recent civil rights legislation seems to have been aimed at aiding the black. Has discrimination for the Indian been as bad as it has for the black?

**McGovern** — It has not been as sharp as it has been with the black. Although the Indian has been greatly neglected in our society, I don't think that prejudice has run as deeply against the Indian as it has against the black. I think there have been avenues open to Indians which have been closed to blacks.

## BIA commissioner presents Indian plight

by Jim Pedersen

Nebraskan Staff Writer

The basis of the Indian problem is the failure of Indians to adjust their way of life to that of white society.

"The country is moving much faster than Indians are moving or care to move," Robert Bennett, commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, said Tuesday in an interview with the *Daily Nebraskan*.

"Their way of life is quite conservative while the world around them is moving very rapidly," he added. "It is a case of the gap between their social and economic level and that of the rest of society being greater than it was a few years ago."

**BENNETT**, AN Oneida Indian from Wisconsin, is strongly opposed to "paternalism" by the federal government. He instead favors "self-determinism" for Indians.

"The theory of self-determinism for Indians is effective because Indians know what their problems are, and they know in what areas they need assistance," he said.

But they want to be the ones to decide when they need assistance; what kind of assistance, and on what terms they are to get it, Bennett continued. Indians don't want someone outside of the Indian community to decide that they have problems and then rush in with assistance.

"Once the Indian people decide for themselves how they are going to go about achieving their goals and solving their problems," according to Bennett, "they will reach the solutions sooner."

**IF THE INDIANS** assume a role of leadership, they will strive with continuity towards goals they really want to reach, Bennett said. This is better than the government or outside society setting goals for the Indians, goals to which they really may not care to aspire.

The appointment of Bennett by former President Lyndon Johnson as commissioner of the BIA in 1966 marked

the first time since 1871 that an Indian held the highest post in the BIA.

"When I was sworn in as commissioner, the President told me that the commitment of the federal government to the Indians included much more than just the BIA," Bennett added. "I would say that the contributions from other government agencies towards solving the Indian problem amounts to a third of our expenditures compared to five per cent two years ago."

Asked if the BIA should be dissolved or changed in any way, Bennett said, "I don't think the BIA should be dismantled or reorganized. The Indian people don't think so either."

Everytime there is any discussion about the BIA, people want to revamp it, according to Bennett. But no one ever wants to give the bureau the money it takes to do the job it ought to do.

**"AS FAR BEHIND** as we are in the building of roads and the construction of schools, just changing the organization of the bureau isn't going to get the job done," he continued. "It simply takes more money."

However, if the Indian people wanted to dismantle the bureau, Congress would do so, Bennett said. The wishes of the Indian people would carry a great deal of weight with Congress.

The BIA working with other federal agencies is now engaged in vocational and adult educational programs to train Indians for skilled labor positions.

"We want to provide industry with a trained labor force so that non-agricultural industries will locate near reservations," Bennett said.

Last year 52 per cent of the job trainees found employment in the state of their residence, he added. This is a big change from a few years ago when trained Indians migrated to Los Angeles or Chicago.

**"FOR MANY YEARS** there was a policy of forced integration of Indians with white society by the BIA," Bennett said. "Now we are trying to prepare the Indian for any eventuality and leave the choice of integration up to the Indian."

Although most minority groups have been increasingly vocal in recent years and Black Power has been the cry of many Negroes, little has been heard from Indians in the form of "Red Power."

According to Bennett, this is so because Indians prefer to work through established agencies.

"They are very vocal to us in the BIA. This is the route they choose to follow," he added. "However, they are very realistic."

Bennett feels that the BIA will never be made into a cabinet level agency because of the already existing National Council on Indian Affairs which consists of six cabinet heads and the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

**MANY OF THE** charges often voiced against the BIA are that the bureau is overly bureaucratic; it is staffed by people who are unwilling to work in a highly competitive society, and its officials are sometimes unsympathetic with the Indian problems.

To these criticisms, Bennett said, "All people in the BIA must meet the same standards of the civil service that every other federal agency requires."

BIA staff workers must meet competitive requirements, he continued. The only exception is that Indians can be hired even if they don't meet all requirements.

"It is significant that over 50 per cent of BIA employees are Indians," Bennett added.

Bennett also commented on two other Indian problems: drinking and hunger.

"Congress repealed a law 12 years ago that stated Indians could neither possess nor drink liquor," he said. "It is now up to the individual tribes what ordinances they want to enact concerning drinking policy."

The Food Commodities program, which involves surplus food distributed to the needy by the Department of Agriculture, is used heavily by Indians, according to Bennett.

"This program makes a real contribution to the welfare of the families involved," he continued. "It is not considered income, and therefore doesn't cut into their welfare under the BIA."



Robert Bennett

## Federal aid maintains Indians; dependency belittles manhood

The 300,000 Indians who live on United States reservations today are virtually dependent on a myriad of federal agencies and cabinet departments for their very livelihood.

Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs is primarily responsible for administering assistance to the Indian, the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Health, Education, and Welfare along with the Office of Economic Opportunity aid the Indian in numerous ways.

The budget for the BIA in 1968 was \$241 million or about one-half of all monies marked for Indian assistance. At the Omaha-Winnebagos reservations in northeastern Nebraska, the allocation was \$80,000 for the 2,500 Indians.

**"THAT SUM** is sufficient," according to G. R. Branchaud, administrative official of the BIA in Winnebago. "They can get by."

According to Branchaud, unemployment assistance is available only to the unemployed; those who are handicapped or receiving treatment in the hospital.

The bureau also provides vocational training for Indians so that they can qualify as welders, carpenters,

and machinery workers, Branchaud said. Other agencies provide on-the-job training and help the individual with funds until the first pay check comes through.

Although unemployment still ranks high on the list of Indian problems, over 61,000 Indians have been helped toward direct employment by these programs in the past 15 years, according to Bureau publications.

The efforts of the Winnebago BIA are rewarded with little praise from the Omaha Indians in neighboring Macy.

"The BIA is not doing what it should," according to Clement Mitchell, a member of the tribal council in Macy. "The people in Winnebago are laying down on the job. They ignore us."

**THE WHITE MAN** merely creates a job for himself through the BIA, Mitchell added. By the time allotted money gets down to the tribe there is nothing.

"Mr. Branchaud has done nothing that I could give him credit for," he said.

Where the BIA has failed in the eyes of many Indians, the Office of Economic Opportunity has succeeded.

"What is keeping many people working is the OEO

program," Sterling Snake, treasurer of the Winnebago tribal council, said. "If those programs are ever withdrawn, we will have a lot of people unemployed."

**THE OEO** funded \$32 million towards Indian programs in 1967. The majority of the funds went to combat such problems as poor health, inadequate education, unemployment, and dilapidated housing.

At the Rosebud Reservation near Porcupine, S.D., the OEO is the major industry employing over 300 Indians.

Eight Job Corps Conservation Centers are located on Indian reservations throughout the U.S. Head Start programs concentrate on the education of pre-school children.

**VISTA VOLUNTEERS** also work on Indian reservations. In Pine Ridge, S.D., Kate Delaney explained a program by which VISTA Associates train local residents to go to homes and teach Indians English and reading so that they may qualify for high school equivalency certificates.

Health problems among Indians are especially prevalent. Infectious and communicable diseases appear

more often among Indians than non-Indians. Tuberculosis is six times more likely to occur in an Indian than in a non-Indian. The average Indian dies 10 years before the average non-Indian.

**"OUR HOSPITAL** is adequately staffed and has good equipment," Schefsky said of the hospital at Winnebago. "It is as good or better than any of the area community hospitals."

There has been a big gap in the education of the Indian as to what he should do medically, Schefsky added. He hasn't been taught why he needs immunization shots or why his pregnant wife should come in for pre-natal examinations.

**INDIAN EDUCATION** is subsidized through the Johnson-O'Malley federal program of Indian education.

Drop-out rates remain high for Indian children, however. In the Johnson-O'Malley districts the range of attendance is from 83 Indians in the first grade to 21 in the twelfth.

Although it is decreasing, Schlinder estimated that the drop-out rate for Indians may be as high as 45 per cent.