

# Winnebago meeting seeks answers



Edward Kline, one of the more outspoken Indian leaders at the Winnebago-Omaha Reservation town meeting, said the success of the meeting remains to be seen.

by John Dvorak  
Nebraskan Staff Writer

WINNEBAGO — A diversified group, including Gov. Norbert T. Tiemann, bawling Indian babies, University Prof. Paul Olson and numerous tribal leaders, gathered here Thursday to discuss the tribulations of life on the Winnebago-Omaha Indian Reservation.

It was the fifth in a series of 26 town hall meetings designed, according to Tiemann, to give people "more of a voice" in state government. For nearly three hours the governor and about 20 state government officials listened to questions, criticisms and complaints of the Indians.

They heard about gangs of youths who roam the reservation at night, sometimes attacking persons in their homes. They heard stories about the absence of law enforcement. They heard of numerous unpaved roads, serious housing shortage and extensive alcoholism.

The governor and his party probably observed other problems just by motoring to the town hall meeting, the first such government convalesce ever held on the reservation.

They drove down Winnebago's main street and saw many empty buildings, as well as the other rundown structures. They observed the meeting site, a high school which dates back several decades.

Near the end of the session, Tiemann promised to proceed with the establishment of a Commission on Indian Affairs for state government.

The commission would act as ombudsman to gather information and present Indian views to the governor, to coordinate the efforts of funding agencies and services and to provide for meaningful dialogue between the governor and Indians of Nebraska.

Tiemann also promised to designate the week of Feb. 16-19 next year as Indian Recognition Week in Nebraska.

It is too early to tell what, if any, effect the town hall meeting had. As Bernice Tegeler, who has operated a children's mission in Winnebago for years, said, "If nothing else, it helps the Indians to talk out their problems. But they've been treated so badly by all government."

**No bull session**  
Tiemann, at several points during the meeting, expounded on the value of the get-together.

"This was not a bull session."

on," he said afterwards. "There will be results."

One of the leaders of the Omaha Tribe, Edward Cline, commented that it "remains to be seen" how serious everyone was at the meeting. He said he was optimistic.

The Indians were not hesitant about questioning the government officials. Five tribal committees were given five minutes for a presentation, according to the ground rules of the meeting. State officials then fielded questions for 15 minutes.

"We feel cheated," began P. J. LaPointe Sr., representing the education committee. "We asked that three members of the state education department be present."

None were present. The governor said they had not been invited.

LaPointe spoke of the "gross inadequacies" of the educational system.

"There is a crucial lack of facilities," he said. "Nothing is done to curb the rate of Indian drop outs. Federal funds are sometimes illegally and wrongfully distributed. There is a distinct lack of communication between the State Department of Education and the local schools."

Tiemann remarked jokingly that his relations with the State Department of Education had not been too good following the firing of Dr. Floyd Miller. Sam Cornelius, director of the Technical Assistance Agency, suggested that specific complaints be brought before state officials.

The Tribal Health and Welfare Committee then took the floor. Dr. Jesse Samuels, representing the group, pointed out that health is tied to many other areas.

"When we at the hospital receive a baby with a 104 degree temperature, breathing problems and near death, it is the result of many problems," he said.

The baby may be cared for by relatives, the doctor added. The baby's mother may be unmarried and a dropout, as well as uninterested and incapable of helping the baby. The father may be in jail for drunkenness. The baby's home may not have a bathroom, or water, or heat.

"Naturally I've taken the worst possible example," Samuels said. "But it is unusual." He asked for a major effort on all fronts to improve the situation.

Law and order on the reservation is an even bigger issue than health and welfare. Before the meeting,



Gov. Tiemann . . . "This was not a bull session."

there were rumors the Indians would do more than just talk about the law enforcement problem. But throughout the session, the 400 persons were perfectly mannered and respectful.

"Nebraska has neglected to fulfill its law and order responsibilities," Alfred Gilpin said. Law enforcement was formerly the responsibility of the federal government but was returned some years ago to the state. Two state deputies supplement county law officers.

One of the deputies, according to Gilpin, doesn't live on the reservation. Hardly any law enforcement is evident on weekends and the overall situation is "inadequate," he said. A burst of applause followed.

"None of us feel there is adequate law enforcement on the reservation," Attorney General Clarence Meyer commented. "We have asked for federal assistance on this problem."

Many problems, however, are up to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, he continued. He accused the BIA of "hedging."

**Police brutality**  
One Indian complained of police brutality on the

reservation. He cited the instance of a law officer coming into the yard of a home and beating up a resident.

"The situation is over and past," Meyer said. "You can't go beat up the police officer, that wouldn't be a solution." Meyer suggested a suit in the courts as a possible alternative.

One Indian broached the idea of an auxiliary police force for the reservation. The attorney general urged against it.

"You don't want an auxiliary organization," he said. "Pretty soon you'd have a bunch of vigilantes and you would need someone to protect you from the auxiliary police."

The auxiliary law officers, acting in a voluntary capacity, would create legal problems, Meyer said.

"You've got to have somebody to sue in case of trouble," he said. "That's what keeps us all in line, we can be sued in the courts."

Even the youth of Winnebago-Omaha Reservation took part in the meeting.

proud of our heritage and we want to be taught about it."

Another problem is the lack of a recreational center — something badly needed by the youth of the reservation, she said.

"We should have something to do besides drink and get in trouble," she said. "The two recreational centers we have now are inadequate and they close before supper."

Besides such close-to-home issues as law and order and education, the Indians complained about taxes.

The Omaha and Winnebago tribes are two of three tribes in the nation paying taxes on their trust lands for roads, bridges, law enforcement, education and other services.

State Tax Commissioner Murrell McNeil admitted that the tribe pays \$77,000 a year in Nebraska real estate taxes, but receives only a fraction of that in restitution for roads, bridges and services.

"We are not here to demand restitution, or throw rocks as some people want to believe," Mrs. Laura Snake said. "We want to define and help solve the so-called 'Indian problem.'"

"There is no Indian problem," she continued. "You have never understood our way of life, our religion, our culture and you have characterized it as inferior. Your sense of values, your way of life, your very way of thinking is different from our own."

"The so-called 'Indian Problem,'" she concluded "only means to us that you recognize that you have failed in your attempts to make us as you are."

## Entertainment by G B and J

by J. L. Schmidt

In spite of the presence of three other folk singers in town, and over and above the sounds of the juke box in the adjacent room, G B and J performed for a surprisingly large crowd in the South Crib of the Union Friday night.

The group, Gail and Brent Skinner and Jack Adkins, sang to the accompaniment of two guitars and did a variety of pop folk-type songs ranging from "Gentle on My Mind," to "If I had a Hammer" which they attributed to "two beards and a broad," referring to Peter, Paul and Mary.

Skinner and Adkins harmonized well as they sang backups for Miss Skinner's renditions of "The Shadow of Your Smile," "By the Time I

Get to Phoenix," "April Come She Will" and several others.

The group did some of their own arrangements which fit their style specifically and gave an interesting appeal to some already popular numbers.

Skinner did a fine job on "September Song" and also held his own in the group's arrangements of "Easy to be Hard" and a combined version of "Let the Sun Shine in" and "Who Will Buy" from Oliver.

Audience sing-along and several jokes by the performers made this "other" concert seem almost like the real thing as the spontaneous event in the Crib came off without a hitch.

## Glee Club to join Cosby show

The Varsity Mens Glee Club won't be the top attraction when it performs at Kansas State University Friday night, but no one is complaining.

The reason is because it's hard to get top billing performing in the same show with Bill Cosby.

Raymond A. Miller, glee club director, explained that his group would be performing on the Cosby show as the result of a "compromise."

The glee club was

originally scheduled to perform at Kansas State Friday night as part of an exchange program originated last winter when the Kansas State Glee performed at a Nebraska basketball game.

The plans were disrupted somewhat, according to Miller, when Kansas State Student Union officials held his own in the group's arrangements of "Easy to be Hard" and a combined version of "Let the Sun Shine in" and "Who Will Buy" from Oliver.

The problem of conflicting performances scheduled for the same night and the same building was solved by combining the two shows.

"We will perform with the Kansas State Glee Club for the first 45 minutes of the show," Miller said, "and then we will go to our seats in front to watch the remainder."

Miller said this would be an excellent opportunity for

his group. "We will get to perform before six or seven thousand people, which wouldn't have been possible otherwise."

Tickets for the Cosby show will be available on the Nebraska campus this week from glee club members.

The exchange program with Kansas State has been "very successful," Miller said, and he is making plans to expand the program to include more schools.

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