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JOINT NEWS RELEASE OF OKLAHOMA SENATORS ROBERT S KERR AND A. S. MIKE
MONRONEY AND OKLAHOMA CONGRESSMEN TOBY MORRIS, CARL ALBERT AND ED EDMONDSON

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1959--Oklahoma Senators Robert S. Kerr and Mike Monroney and Congressmen Toby Morris, Carl Albert, and Ed Edmondson today urged the Senate Appropriations Committee to provide a direct appropriation to cover the cost of administering loans to Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Oklahoma lawmakers urged the direct appropriation "in order to avoid further reduction of the funds appropriated by the Congress for the specific purpose of Indian loans," pointing out that the principal available for Indian loan purposes had been reduced by nearly 20 percent due to such assessments, mostly during the past four years.

They told the committee that Bureau of Indian Affairs officials had informed the Oklahoma delegation on May 6, that a reduction totalling \$2,710,000 in loan funds had been ordered by directives of Congress to meet administrative costs.

Indian loan fund appropriations since 1934 have totalled only \$13,800,000, including \$2,000,000 for the Oklahoma Indian Loan Fund, \$1,800,000 in the Navajo-Hopi Loan Fund, and \$10,000,000 in the General Indian Loan Fund, the committee was told.

"All were intended to be continuing, revolving funds, under their authorizations," the Oklahomans told the Committee, and pointed out that "The impact of this practice was brought forcefully home to the Oklahoma delegation this month when the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the first time levied upon the Oklahoma Indian Loan Fund for a percentage of administrative costs."

This reduced the March balance of the Oklahoma Indian Loan Fund from a total of \$1,848,000 to a March 31 total of \$1,315,000, and a similar reduction of the Navajo-Hopi Loan Fund changed its balance from approximately \$641,000 to approximately \$493,000, the committee was informed.

Stating that they "do not believe it was intended by Congress that administrative costs should consume the principal of these revolving loan funds," the Oklahomans urged that the House-passed Interior Department appropriations bill be amended to provide by appropriation for administrative needs of the Indian loan funds, "and the amounts by which these funds have been reduced be replaced at this time."

Other members of the Oklahoma delegation sent representatives to the hearing and were given permission to file statements with the Committee later.

Congressman Morris also suggested that if the committee could not agree with this procedure that it consider raising the loan fund itself.