

file B17

★ news release

Wilson -- 343-9431
Henderson- 343-9431

INDIAN STUDENTS FROM ARIZONA AND OKLAHOMA TO VISIT WASHINGTON, D. C.

"Cultural enrichment" is the program's formal title, but for ninety Indian children it is a visit to a new world that until now was confined to the pages of their textbooks.

The students are enrolled in Indian boarding schools in Arizona and Oklahoma. Through programs developed by the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs and funded by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare they will visit the Nation's capital April 8 through 15.

One group is a chorus of 50 Navajo children, 6 to 14 years of age. They attend the Teec Nos Pos boarding school in the northeastern corner of Arizona. Well known in the Four Corners area (New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado) their singing began as a method of teaching English. To youngsters who knew only the intricate Navajo language, the pronunciation and phrasing of a second language -- English -- came easier through song than through classroom drills.

Their audiences in Washington will be the children of District of Columbia schools. The Navajo chorus will perform traditional and modern American choral music and Navajo chants and dances.

The visit to Washington was made possible by a grant under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which assists programs designed to improve children's understanding of the world beyond their own horizons. Every child in Teec Nos Pos comes from a family with an income level well below the poverty line.

The Oklahoma students, ranging in age from 12 to 18, are from Seneca, Jones Academy and Eufula boarding schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The trip from Oklahoma to Washington was planned by and financed by the students, who sponsored bean dinners, ball games and archery contests. Churches and civic groups also contributed to their fund.

The Oklahomans are members of the Five Civilized Tribes (Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek and Seminole). Their Washington trip is just one of several accomplishments achieved in the first year of a Youth Development Project financed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Goal

of the program is to help students learn to make plans and decisions for themselves.

While in Washington, both groups will meet with Robert L. Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and their respective Congressmen. They will tour the White House, see Congress in action, and visit the traditional historic sites in the Nation's capital. In addition, they hope to be spectators at a traditional American activity, a major-league baseball game.

The Navajo children will be in Washington from April 8 to 15; the Oklahoma group from April 7 to 11.

#

92288