

Indian Affairs

March 23, 1945

Mr. Joseph Bruner, President
American Indian Federation
Post Office Box 174
Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Dear Joe:

I am just in receipt of your letter of the 21st instant enclosing copy of a resolution apparently adopted by your organization March 18, 1945. I am very much interested in what you have to say and I assure you that the substance of your remarks, together with the copy of your resolution, will be submitted to the House Committee on Indian Affairs. This will likely be done next Monday at the next meeting of the Committee.

A group was in my office day before yesterday including Judge N. D. Johnson of Claremore and Dan M. Madrano of Tulsa. The matter of Indian claims was considered at length in our conference. I insisted that the Indians let me know what they want done in the premises, and I shall be happy to try to carry out their wishes. This is what I wrote you, and I wrote the same letter to a number of leading Indian citizens in my District.

Some feel that the Stigler Bill is the best solution. Others have suggested that the bill should provide for vesting the Federal District Courts with jurisdiction over all Indian claims. There may be other approaches or preferred solutions, but they have not been mentioned to me by anyone. I think that you and the other leaders of your people, should let me know what you think is best for the Indians. That is what I have requested every one of you to do.

You seem to be somewhat critical of me on account of the fact that Representative Stigler introduced the Indian Claims Commission Bill, H. R. 1198. Apparently he had this bill all prepared and introduced it on January 8, 1945, which as I recall, was the third day this Congress was in session. Hence, you can readily appreciate the fact that it was next to impossible for me to have introduced a bill before Representative Stigler introduced his. Furthermore, I think he introduced the same bill in the last session of Congress, and merely reintroduced it at this session. But most important of all, I have not been able in my

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interviews with the Indians, and have not yet been able as a result of numerous conferences and letters from you and others, to obtain from the leading Indians any suggestion as to just what they think is best to do in the premises. I do not want to interject my individual ideas into the subject until after I can hear from you people what you think best on the subject. Wont you please be kind enough to do this?

I have never shirked responsibility, and I am not afraid to face the issue; but I am not going off half-cocked. I want to have the powder dry and in the gun before I aim, and at any rate before I flush the game. I know you will agree that I am right in this sentiment.

So, Joe, give me a hand. Please cooperate with me to the extent of letting me know what you honestly think I should do. What kind of a bill do you want me to introduce? It does not make any difference what Representative Stigler has introduced, nor what kind of a bill anyone else may introduce. The question is, what kind of a bill should I introduce. In other words, what do you Indiana want in the way of a bill to get out of the situation you have so long endured?

The Republican and Democratic platforms have been absolutely silent as to the method of approach or the kind of legislation that should be introduced. Let us be realistic, and get down together and work this out on a basis that will be fair and to the best interests of all concerned.

Let me hear from you at your early convenience.

Sincerely yours,

George B. Schwabe, M. C.

P. S. I expect to be in my office in Tulsa in the Hunt Building the latter part of next week and most of the first week in April. I suggest that you and some of the other boys drop in and see me and let me have your views and let's talk this situation over man to man.

G. B. S.

cc: S. R. Lewis, Acting Chairman
Administrative Board
American Indian Federation
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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Schurz, Nevada

The American Indian Federation

*A national non-partisan, non-sectarian organization
of Indians, by Indians and for Indians in an
effort to bring about a final settlement
with the Federal Government.*

HEADQUARTERS

BOX 174

SAPULPA, OKLAHOMA

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

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WALTER COLBERT, Ardmore, Oklahoma

March 21, 1945.

Hon. George B. Schwabe, M. C.,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Schwabe:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of March 9, in reply to mine of February 19, transmitting a copy of a resolution by the federation's Administrative Board, touching the pledge of the Republican party in its platforms of 1940 and 1944, and your commitment to the platform of the latter year as your party's candidate for Congress from the First District.

Our Administrative Board was in regular session in Tulsa the 18th and I submitted for the Board's consideration, your letter of reply to its resolution of February 19, as well as H. R. 1198 by Congressman Stigler. The Board's action, by resolution, was unanimous and unequivocal. Copy of the resolution is enclosed.

I am sorry that I cannot agree with you that Congressman Stigler's bill is in any manner an approach to conformance with the Republican party's national platform pledges of 1940 and 1944, as I interpret their meaning; I cannot agree that it is possible to amend the Stigler bill in any form and make it conform to an "IMMEDIATE" settlement of all Indian claims, as pledged in the Republican party's national platforms for the above years; that was the unanimous view of the federation's Administrative Board at its meeting of the 18th. There was also a unanimous manifest surprise on the part of the Board - four Democrats and three Republicans - that Congressman Stigler should be leading off with legislation "which is calculated to fulfill the pledge of the Republican Party in its National Platforms of 1940 and 1944", as you suggest, in view of the fact that the Congressman's own party, in its 1944 national platform, completely ignored the subject of Indians and payment of Indian claims.

May I suggest in conclusion, that the federation membership is 100% sold on the Republican party's national platform pledges of 1940 and 1944 to the Indians. Every Indian wants a final settlement. We are of the firm view that the party cannot, in good conscience, hedge on its platform pledges or throw the load on the Democrats by any attempt to amend

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New Deal legislation which has been before the Congress so long it is putrid - the New Deal came in swinging on the gate of a claims commission for the settlement of all Indian ills. It's swing has been placid and continuous - on that gate - the past twelve years, 'IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE.' The Republican party can and should make an honest attempt to bring about a change - for the better; it will if it is worth it's salt and hopes to again come into power.

Sincerely,

THE AMERICAN INDIAN FEDERATION,

By

Joseph Bruner
National President

JB/AK
enclosure

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R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Hon. George B. Schwabe, Congressman from the First District of Oklahoma, has recently mailed to several members of this organization copies of H. R. 1198 - providing for the creation of a claims commission to hear and investigate Indian claims - introduced into the Congress by Hon. William Stigler, Congressman for the Second District of Oklahoma; and,

WHEREAS, the Administrative Board of the American Indian Federation, in regular session, in the City of Tulsa, District Court room, Tulsa county Oklahoma, has carefully considered said proposed legislation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we disapprove of said HR 1198, for the following reasons: (1) It has the germ of another bureau - we now have one Indian bureau too many for the good of the Indians. (2) It means no recovery for ninety percent if not all Oklahoma Indian tribes, except that the Congress strike down decisions of the U. S. Court of Claims and the United States Supreme Court, in many instances. (3) The proviso that one member of the claims commission, at least, "shall be a duly enrolled member of some recognized tribe or band of Indians" is an empty gesture for the consumption of those who are race-minded. (4) The proposed legislation, could all tribal claims be paid thereunder tomorrow, leaves the Indian bureau with the opportunity it is now using, to include in it's Indian-number-figure, for appropriation purposes, Congressman Stigler and more than 100,000 other Oklahoma Indians who are equally as capable of protecting their interests and sustaining themselves in the environment in which they now live as Congressman Stigler is capable of protecting his interests and sustaining himself in the environment of which he is now a part. Through this channel of subterfuge and false-pretense, over the past twelve years, has been poured approximately \$600,000,000 of tribal Indian funds and white taxpayers' money. This is wrong - we are against wrong.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be immediately mailed to Hon. George B. Schwabe, M. C., Washington, D. C.

Unanimously adopted , this 18th day of March, 1945.

S. F. Lewis

S. F. Lewis, Acting Chairman,
Administrative Board, American
Indian Federation.

ATTEST:

M. Edna Wilson
M. Edna Wilson,
Acting Secretary.

CHAMBER COFF