3-14-1966

Congressional Record S. 5351-52 - Statement of Senator Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, in recent years periodic appeals have been distributed throughout the country by the St. Labre Indian Mission at Ashland, Mont. These appeals made up of letters, plastic dolls, and ornaments ask for funds to aid the mission in educating and caring for Indian children, mostly Northern Cheyenne Indians. These circulars have prompted many outraged inquiries. The St. Labre Mission appeal is a legitimate one but there is need for clarification and understanding of responsibilities.

The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation is located in southeastern Montana and has for many years been one of the most needy of the reservations in the Great Plains. The reservation has limited resources for the number of inhabitants. In recent years under the new administration within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, conditions improved considerably. The accelerated public works program was a shot in the arm for these people. Accelerated public works provided improved roads, management of timber resources and other resources development. The Indian health sanitation program is bringing new water and sewer facilities to areas which have been without. Self-help and public housing projects are underway. Improvements are being made, and admittedly, there is considerable to be done. Several programs under OEO are being implemented.

The Northern Cheyenne people are a proud people, their needs are great, but they ask for little. Perhaps the major reason for the improvements and attitude is the president of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, John Woodenlegs. John is an old friend, a man devoted to the cause of his people. He is a quiet man, but determined in his effort to improve conditions and cast aside the unpleasant stigmas that have been attached to his reservation.

Next we turn to the St. Labre Indian Mission which is located at Ashland, Mont., in an area adjacent to the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. The mission does provide food, shelter, and education for many needy Indian children. These children come from families who have migrated away from the reservation and have become dependent on local welfare and the mission. The mission work among the Indian children is financed from funds received from the appeals circulated by the mission. The plastic articles which are enclosed in the appeal are manufactured by a small factory located at Ashland. The factory was constructed by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and employs some 30 Indians. I believe that the mission is the sole purchaser of these items, thus there is an interdependence between the mission and the Indians.

Quite frankly the St. Labre Indian Mission, in preparing its printed appeals, exploits a dramatic situation which is no longer associated with the entire reservation, but is somewhat limited to an off-reservation area. The situation highlights a continuing problem of who is responsible for the welfare of Indians who move away from their reservations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs' responsibility ends after a period of time and often local welfare agencies are hesitant to
take on the additional load. In this instance, the mission is filling a void. As I indicated earlier, the Northern Cheyennes are a proud people but they need a better way to make sure that they get this assistance is for all interested parties to work together, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the St. Labre Indian Mission, and the State welfare and education departments.

Senator, I ask unanimous consent to have printed at the conclusion of my remarks in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD any newspaper clippings and reports which provide additional information.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Mar. 30, 1966]

AMERICAN INDIANS' SELF-HELP

To the Editor:

I would like to compliment the Times on Homer Bigart's news articles on Indian tribes in Montana and North Dakota (March 13, 14).

Montana's Northern Cheyenne tribe is today faced with those who work in Indian community development as one of the most successful tribes in the Nation. In the last 5 years, under the leadership of Chief Labre, tribe income has doubled. Morbidity and mortality rates have decreased.

Under the leadership of President John Wooden Legs and the tribal council, the Cheyennes are involved in land development, livestock production, crafts, and tourism. There is a total of 332 new homes either under construction or scheduled for construction. The tribe has just established a $900,000 scholarship fund.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Much remains to be done. To boost employment and attract industry, to develop lumber production and to exploit the rich uranium resources, a new uranium company is involved. There has been a 2,500,000 dollar industrial development fund to help realize these goals.

The Cheyennes are fighting to gain respect and understanding from their fellow citizens. The March 14 article will help to counteract national publicity caricaturing the Cheyennes as a hopeless "race of sorrows," the subject of over a million dollars in credit work.

Removing a cause of poverty among this tribe. The government gave up trying to fight the Cheyennes after the defeat and, instead, gave them the Crow Reservation.

Indecent by disease and malnutrition, the tribe was soon driven to the point of desperation. The government, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the St. Labre Catholic Mission and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, the attached school and the State of Montana have been involved. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe has been helped by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The St. Labre Mission has recently constructed a new modern parochial boarding school and day school and administration buildings. This mission school is now available to several schools available to children of the area. Indian children also attend public schools at Ashland or at Lame Deer town on the reservation.

In response to the recurring appeals from persons who have received solicitations for funds from the St. Labre Catholic Mission in Ashland, Montana, and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, the attached school and the St. Labre Mission in Ashland, Montana, we have been working to improve the lives of the Northern Cheyenne tribe.

MANY CHILDREN FROM THE RESERVATION ARE ATTENDING THE SCHOOL AND ARE BEING HELPED.

Sponsoring the Indian Mission School, Ashland, Mont.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

STATEMENT CONCERNING THE ST. LABRE MISSION SCHOOL, ASHLAND, MONT.

The Cheyenne Indians are people who have had a hard time in their past, but they are a proud people. The Cheyenne tribe has a long history of fighting for their land and culture. They are a proud people but they need a better way to make sure that they get this assistance is for all interested parties to work together, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the St. Labre Indian Mission, and the State welfare and education departments.

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FAMILY INCOME, NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE
(CALENDAR YEAR 1964)

It is always difficult to obtain accurate information on individual or family incomes. However, surveys in connection with preparing plans for the use of judgment funds obtained by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe have added to the data previously available on this subject. The following data are the best estimates from all available sources.

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<th>Range of income</th>
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| AVAILABLE LAND AND LAND USE |

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<th>Programs</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>New homes completed</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>New homes under construction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New homes approved for construction</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New homes-applications anticipated</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TRIBAL GOVERNMENT |

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe is organized and federally chartered. It is governed by a tribal council. Annually the tribe receives an income estimated at $140,000.

JUDGMENT FUND PROGRAM

In 1964 the Northern Cheyenne Tribe received from the Indian Claims Commission a net judgment award of $3,912,436 for lands ceded to the United States nearly a century ago. From this, the tribe programmed expenditures as follows:

- Per capital payment: $270,000
- Family improvement: 2,700
- Education: 250
- Economic development: 600

The tribe's family improvement and family plan programs authorize $1,000 for each enrolled member to be used for long-term economic benefit for the family. This program from the dollar standpoint is 58 percent complete.

The education portion of the judgment fund program is set up as a trust fund to draw interest, which interest is to be used for college and other higher education assistance to Northern Cheyenne tribes.

The money set aside for economic development is to be used for such projects as construction of community or tribal buildings, public utility facilities for the benefit of tribal members, industrial development (construction of buildings for factories, investments in companies to put factories on the reservation), land purchase, business investments, loan programs, recreation and tourism, business development, etc. The tribe has already used $101,000 of economic development funds to construct a building which is presently leased by Guild Arts and Crafts, Inc., an industry which provides employment and income for the Northern Cheyenne Indians.

The tribal council has primary responsibility for administering the judgment fund program and expenditures are required to be within the following criteria:

1. Housing
2. Household furnishings
3. Agricultural enterprises
4. Investments in small business
5. Education and training
6. Savings
7. Medical and dental services
8. Other (as approved by administration committee and superintendent)

STATUS OF HOUSING (OCTOBER 1965)

- Poor housing on the reservation has been serious and a contributing factor to retarded education, health, welfare, employment, and most resources development programs.
- Members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe have taken the necessary action to improve their poor housing conditions through use of family plan funds and establishment of a tribal housing authority under the Public Housing Administration.
- Units are being constructed under the mutual-help program.

| TRIBAL GOVERNMENT |

The BIA has worked with the Northern Cheyenne Indians in many ways to develop employment opportunities and to train the Indians for work. Under the direct employment program, families are helped with employment registration and subsistence and retraining and subsistence end, and subsistence for 4 weeks at the tribal council. A family is also provided health services for 6 months, and in the event of family emergency, subsistence may again be provided. Under the adult vocational training program, the family is assisted in making a choice of type and place of training, transportation and subsistence enroute to training site, and subsistence for the period of training. Health services are also provided for the period of training, and upon completion of training, employment is developed for the family head. On the reservation, employment has been at all-time high.

| LABOR MARKET INFORMATION |

Northern Cheyenne students in school:

- BIA schools: 861
- In Bureau schools: 255
- Boarding students: 131
- In public schools: 350
- In Labre school: 234
- In school age: 19
- Schoolage children not in school: 8

Total: 1,009

New homes under family plan program: 305

New homes completed: 34

New homes under construction: 29

New homes approved for construction: 22

New homes-applications anticipated: 15

RePair and remodeling to existing homes under family plan program: 145

RePair completed: 8

RePairs approved: 20

RePairs-applications anticipated: 113

New homes under mutual-help housing: 50

Under construction: 10

Construction planned: 40

Total new homes for tribal members: 445

| PERSONAL SERVICES |

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and Public Health Service provide members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe with a wide range of services, including education, medical and hospital services, welfare, law and order, adult vocational training, credit, etc. The emphasis on services is not limited to Bureau of Indian Affairs programs, per se, but includes efforts to qualify Cheyennes for taking part in non-Bureau programs for which they are eligible. In fiscal year 1965, social assistance was provided for Northern Cheyenne tribal members as follows:

| Mike Mansfield Papers, Series 21, Box 43, Folder 31, Mansfield Library, University of Montana |
The Northern Cheyennes are participating in the various provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act. They have benighted or are continuing to benefit from community action programs. A staff of 40, including administrators, nurses, teachers, community health workers, and aids, most of whom are volunteers, are directing special community health programs. Supplementary education programs for 36 high school students were provided at Eastern Montana College last year. In addition, there is a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding and day school at Busby, Mont., with a total enrollment of 263 Northern Cheyenne students. There are several other Federal, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, day schools in the reservation.

In the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the center of the reservation, and many other communities on the reservation. Family plan money has also been used to repair homes in the reservation and for the construction of 44 new homes at Ashland. There are 323 new homes either constructed or scheduled for construction on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. There is a 200-square-foot log shack that people must live in but it is better than living in a shelter for a material or element needed for the Northern Cheyennes to institutions of higher learning.

"The industrial development fund made possible by the Northern Cheyennes from the U.S. Government has also made possible a scholarship fund in the amount of $250,000. Many banks are now underway to establish a scholarship trust fund. Proceeds from the tribe's coal for; the handicraft industry at Ashland. A total of $323 million was expended on our own projects for the time, prevented 16 other head of stock, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. We plan to advertise this sale again soon with lower stumpage rates than the earlier advertisement.

You may inform your readers that there is capital available from this industrial fund which is available to reliable and responsible prospective industries. Perhaps you can help us in our effort to attract industry to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. This would be much more a more far-reaching effect than charity. During the month of September, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation is one of the highest levels of employment that it has ever achieved. We believe that it was the highest level of employment of any year. At this high level of employment, our unemploymen was still 29 percent, which is an unfavorable rate compared to the national average of 4.5 percent national average of employment. However, the Northern Cheyennes are good
March 29, 1966

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

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SENATE

workers. They want jobs. Many of them need jobs. That is one of the reasons I am writing you this letter.

“Not only are we Northern Cheyennes trying to help ourselves, but we are also receiving assistance in our efforts from many sources. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is helping us in many ways with their programs of credit, economic development, public works, education, vocational training, employment, community development, and in the upgrading of social services.

“Furthermore, we are benefiting from many provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council is sponsoring a community action program which has a staff of 40. This staff includes administrators, nurses, teachers, community health workers, and aids, most of whom are volunteers. They are directing special community health, remedial reading, and child development programs.

“The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council also sponsors a Neighborhood Youth Corps which has provided employment for more than 100 youths, age 16 through 21, some are in-school and out-of-school programs at Busby, Lame Deer, and Ashland at Federal, public, and mission schools. Other Neighborhood Youth Corps workers are employed at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Northern Cheyenne Agency, the Public Health Service Center, and by the tribe on various projects throughout the reservation. Nine VISTA workers are serving in a variety of ways throughout the reservation. During the summer of 1965, 120 preschool children on the reservation were taught in child development centers under the Headstart program. The Headstart program has been continued on the reservation under the community action program. During the summer of 1966, we hope to have 35 college students from Montana universities working on the reservation in a work-study program. Nearly $500,000 has been assigned to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation from the Economic Opportunity Act, and we feel that benefits from the amount spent so far are already much in evidence.

“As a result of these Government programs, the employment at the Guild Arts and Crafts factory at Ashland, and through employment made possible through the construction of new homes on the reservation, the gross reservation income for 1965 was about $1.1 million. This means that there was a per capita income of approximately $500, or an average family income slightly in excess of $3,000 per year. With these salaries plus a tribal program for needy families of distribution of surplus commodities, I find it hard to believe your comment in your editorial that there is ‘scarcely a bite to eat.’

“We are realistic, however, and know that our economy needs strengthening. We still have much that needs to be done in improving our reservation. It can only be permanently strengthened through the creation of additional year-round permanent employment. We want to attract industry. We know things can be better. We will do everything we can to help ourselves. Please print this letter in the hope that some industrialist interested in locating on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation may read it.

“Thank you very much for taking the time to read my long letter. I will be very happy to answer any questions you have about it.

“Sincerely yours,

JOHN WOODEN LEGS,
President, Northern Cheyenne Tribe.”