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Letter from J. B. Sullivan to Representative Burdick Regarding Investigation of the Three Affiliated Tribes Tribal Council, March 31, 1952

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DR. J. B. SULLIVAN
SWEET GRASS, MONTANA

TO

Hon. Usher L. Burdick;
Congressman from No. Dakota:
WASHINGTON. D.C

March 31, 1952:

Dear Congressman,

I note, with much interest, in Associated Press dispatches of your resolution, to investigate the activities in the Fort Berthold tribal Council.

Allow me to congratulate you on your action.

Also noted that Martin Cross chairman of the tribal Indian council. had a press interview: in which he stated that he and the other members of the council, will be present at the April 4th meeting to answer, what he terms THE RUMP GROUP, which is protesting the conduct of the Council. That this RUMP GROUP, does not represent the Tribal Council or do not represent the members of the Tribe.

If he said they do not represent the Tribal council and do not represent the INDIAN BUREAU he would have been correct.

I was employed at Elbowoods and at several other Indian reservations and I think I have some of the answers.

I--- The Indian Tribal council is selected by the Indian Bureau, thru the Superintendents on the various agencies.
And even then any acts of the Tribal council can be nullified by the agency Superintendent:

2--- The present Indian commissioner, Mr Myers, in a letter to Senator Karl Mundt (of which letter you may have a copy) very definitely showed his hand in the Tribal councils. In this letter over his official signature he writes:
" THE VIEWS OF THE REASONABLE MEMBERS OF THE TRIBES HAVE BEEN SOUGHT AND GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION:"

The Commissioner in this letter classes the Indians into TWO groups. The REASONABLE and the UNREASONABLE: and he the Indian King selects who are the Reasonable ones.

He does not tell Senator Mundt that the views of the reasonable ones will be followed; they will be given careful consideration: The reasonable Indian will be the Yes-Yes Indian, The unreasonable Indian, will be the No-No Indian and he will not even be allowed to air his views. This is what some would term HUMAN SLAVERY:

The Indian bureau was created for the benefit of all the Indians in the United States who are to become wards of the government, but its benefits are being bestowed upon the Reasonable Indians and the indian bureacrats in Washington,

The Indian tribal council does not benefit the Indians, ~~but~~ as a Tribe. The Indian bureau acts as Judge, Lawyer and Jury.

I was employed at the Wagner Indian Hospital in the Spring of 1951, up to April 30, 1951.

The Indians wished to employ a lawyer of their own choosing to represent them in their claims against the government.

The elections of the Indians, by the Indians, in the matter of freedom is similar to the election in Russia. They do not have a chance to vote.

DR. J. B. SULLIVAN
SWEET GRASS, MONTANA

March 31, 1952

In the matter of choosing their own lawyer the Superintendent of the Rosebud Agency, sent notices of an election to some 2 dozen Yankton Indians. In the notice was the place and time of the meeting.

The meeting was held with not over 30 Indians present and they selected the Yankton Indian Tribal Council, and a committee picked by the Superintendent went to Washington, to consult with the bureau and selected the Lawyer the Bureau recommended.

Many of the Indians told me they did not even know there was to be a tribal meeting and did not know there had been one, so cleverly were the details worked out.

Recently The Secretary of the Interior, Mr Chapman, overruled the efforts of the bureau to control hiring of lawyers the Indians wanted, But the recommendations of the bureau mean nothing to the welfare of the Indians. The Indian bureau can get around these small matters of law. They even get around the rulings of the Secretary of the Interior.

There are 2 remedies in my opinion for these abuses:

First. To get a new Indian commissioner, as requested by the Indians at their state Inter tribal meetings, which meetings are under the wing of the governors of some 17 states and over which the Indian Bureau Has Not Yet obtained control.

Second. To discharge ALL the Assistant Commissioners, acting commissioners, for the Commissioner and supervising and consulting aids to the commissioner.

There are a dozen of these high ups in the Indian bureau, who run the bureau. Recently Mr Zimmerman, who was acting commissioner for a long time was removed, and more recently Commissioner Nichols was removed.

BUT the high ups were not removed and they go along on their merry way making it tough for the poor Indians and thumbing their fingers at the members of congress.

I have enough Faith and Respect for Mr Chapman, the Secretary of the Interior to believe that if he was acquainted with the facts he would make short shrift of the Bureau and there would be a housecleaning.

I would suggest removing all the big wigs in the Indian bureau who had been appointed before 1942 or the last ten years ago.

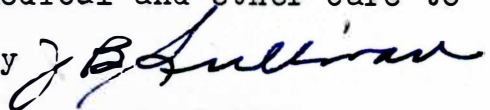
This would remove the high hats and get the Bureau on an even keel- They talk about Integration with the whites and they are not even in favor of integration. Integration would be the loss of too many good jobs. but they are fooling Congress and most of all the Indians.

I have heard one of the top shots, make the statement in public: That they intended to get all the money they could get from Congress to put their policy over of turning all the Indian Hospitals into clinics, and if Congress would not give enuf they would use the Tribal funds and when they were gone, turn the sick Indians over to the States.

I thank you for the time spent in reading this letter.

My only interest is in the improvement of Medical and other care to the North American Indian.

Sincerely



Dr J. B. Sullivan
Sweetgrass

Montana