



6-22-1956

Letter from Martin Cross to Representative Burdick Enclosing Letter to the Secretary of the Interior Regarding Delay of Three Affiliated Tribes Tribal Elections, June 22, 1956

Matin Cross

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Recommended Citation

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Tribal Business Council

THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES
NEW TOWN, NORTH DAKOTA

June 22, 1956

Honorable Usher L. Burdick
House Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Usher:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, regarding Tribal Council elections, for your information.

At the last visit we had with your office, I noted that Mrs. Knudson seemed rather disturbed by this delay of tribal elections.

It now becomes apparent that something has to be done about it, and the enclosed letter will definitely show that the Tribal Council Members are ready and willing to try to remedy the situation.

Good luck, come June 26th.

Sincerely I am



Martin Cross
Chairman, Tribal Business Council,
Three Affiliated Tribes

Copy - To: Mr. & Mrs. L. Burdick

June 22, 1956

The Honorable, Fred Seaton
Secretary of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Secretary Seaton:

As Chairman of the Tribal Council of the Three Affiliated Tribes, I have been instructed by the Tribal Council to urge you to select a date for a tribal referendum to amend our Constitution.

As you probably know, since the Garrison Dam was constructed, several of our old districts on the Reservation were inundated, forcing our people to evacuate, so that some former districts set up by our Constitution do not exist and in others very few people live there. It therefore becomes necessary for the Tribal Council to create new districts and pass a resolution calling for an elections to amend our Constitution.

In 1954, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Article III and Article IV of our Constitution were amended, or rather proposed amendments were written creating new districts and inserting new qualifications for holding office. Two elections have been called but neither was decisive because the necessary 30 percent of the electors had not turned out to vote, a necessity required by our Constitution.

The Tribal Council is of the opinion that before new officers of the Tribal Council can be elected, the amendment creating new districts must be adopted. As the old districts have been inundated and abandoned, there is no one to be elected therefrom to any office and no one to vote if it were possible to have a nominee from a district which does not exist in fact. Moreover, practically all of the Indians residing on Fort Berthold have changed their residence to the proposed new districts, such districts being called by the proposed new names as contained in the amendment. It would therefore seem imperative that this election to adopt the said amendments be called as soon as possible.

Further, under our constitution, which provides, "that all electors shall appear at the polls to vote in his or her community, "non-residents are not entitled to vote, either by absentee ballot or otherwise. It would further appear, that in past elections, all members of the Tribes have been count as electors, whether residing on or off the Reservation and this does not seem consistent with our constitution. We believe that

only those residing on the Reservation, or maintaining their residence thereon, should be entitled to vote and be counted as electors. Under such an interpretation the 30 percent required could be easily obtained.

In any event, the Council requests that the Secretary set a new Election date for adopting the proposed amendments at a very early time, so that a new elections for Tribal Council members can be called.

Respectfully,



Martin Cross
Chairman Tribal Council
Three Affiliated Tribes
Fort Berthold Reservation