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National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) records – Denver, CO: General Material, 1944

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MEETING WITH DR. EDUARD LINDEMAN, TREASURER-
CONTROLLER, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

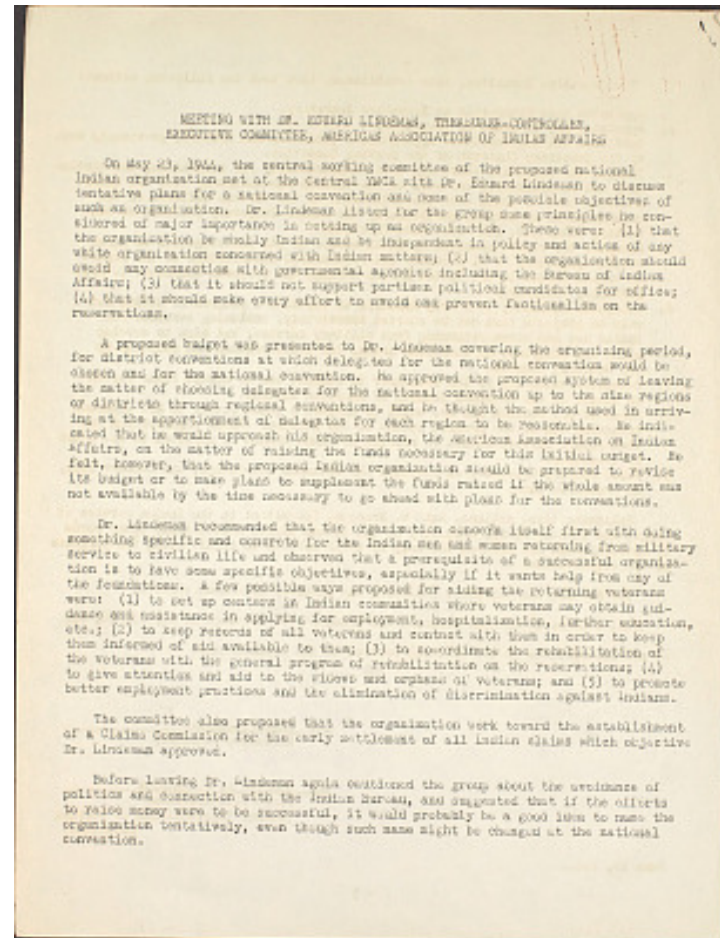
On May 23, 1944, the central working committee of the proposed national Indian organization met at the Central YMCA with Dr. Eduard Lindeman to discuss tentative plans for a national convention and some of the possible objectives of such an organization. Dr. Lindeman listed for the group some principles he considered of major importance in setting up an organization. These were: (1) that the organization be wholly Indian and be independent in policy and action of any white organization concerned with Indian matters; (2) that the organization should avoid any connection with governmental agencies including the Bureau of Indian Affairs; (3) that it should not support partisan political candidates for office; (4) that it should make every effort to avoid and prevent functionalism on the reservations.

A proposed budget was presented to Dr. Lindeman covering the organizing period, for district conventions at which delegates for the national convention would be chosen and for the national convention. He approved the proposed system of leaving the matter of choosing delegates for the national convention up to the nine regions or districts through regional conventions, and he thought the method used in arriving at the apportionment of delegates for each region to be reasonable. He indicated that he would approach his organization, the American Association on Indian Affairs, on the matter of raising the funds necessary for this initial budget. He felt, however, that the proposed Indian organization should be prepared to revise its budget or to make plans to supplement the funds raised if the whole amount was not available by the time necessary to go ahead with plans for the conventions.

Dr. Lindeman recommended that the organization concern itself first with doing something specific and concrete for the Indian men and women returning from military service to civilian life and observed that a prerequisite of a successful organization is to have some specific objectives, especially if it wants help from any of the foundations. A few possible ways proposed for aiding the returning veterans were: (1) to set up centers in Indian communities where veterans may obtain guidance and assistance in applying for employment, hospitalization, further education, etc.; (2) to keep records of all veterans and contact with them in order to keep them informed of aid available to them; (3) to coordinate the rehabilitation of the veterans with the general program of rehabilitation on the reservation; (4) to give attention and aid to the widows and orphans of veterans; and (5) to promote better employment practices and the elimination of discrimination against Indians.

The committee also proposed that the organization work toward the establishment of a Claims Commission for the early settlement of all Indian claims which objective Dr. Lindeman approved.

Before leaving Dr. Lindeman again cautioned the group about the avoidance of politics and connection with the Indian Bureau, and suggested that if the efforts to raise money were to be successful, it would probably be a good idea to name the organization tentatively, even though such name might be changed at the national convention.



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