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*National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center*

## **National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) records – Denver, CO: Proceedings, 1944**

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 04:17:53

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affiliated with the Indian Service. With a few exceptions, their hearts and souls are vested in the Indians - Indians first. This organization itself is absolutely and entirely independent of any Government function or of the Indian Service whatsoever. That in my opinion leads me to believe that we have the sincere effort of those people who are affiliated with the Indian Service in making this of the the finest organizations in the land. We must remember first that our Indians identified with the Indian Service, regardless of the positions they hold, are not within the policy making or program arranging or law making staff of the Indian Service. They are first in my opinion interested in Indian Welfare. Secondly they are interested in earning a livelihood for themselves and their families. It is true that they are guided in their efforts by certain rules and regulations, which the Department, the Secretary of the Interior has promulgated from laws passed by the Congress and naturally they are following the laws to the letter. But we are forming here an organization to correct some of those rules and regulations and these boys who are affiliated with the Indian Service are in a position to give first aid, in my opinion, to the Indians by by associating with the Indian Service. I believe that those men who have come here, although they are identified with the Indian Service, this organization needs their help and with their help, we are going to try to expand the position of the Indian Service. We are going to try to broaden the functions of the Indian Service. There is not anything that they have that I want, except to see that they get the recognition they rightly deserve.

MR. LA MOTTE: In justice, I am compelled to make a few remarks. I am known to most of you. I am as an independent. These young men and women will probably live their lives away from the reservation. Their interests from now on will be the blood that they have in their body which is Indian. The start of this organization that they don't want any official position. Their thoughts are for the welfare of the Indians and not themselves.

MR. EXENDINE: This question about employment in the Indian Service has come up. Why can't that be left up to the assembly who is electing the officers to decide whether they want Indian Service employees elected as officers or not. That can be decided when nominations are made to fill the positions. If the people do not want a Government employee in the office, they can vote them down.

MR. SHORT: I want to make a few remarks at this time. If you folks were going out to shoot an Indian you probably wouldn't take a shot at Mr. DeMers or myself. I am a mixed-blood Chickasaw Indian. The only education that I have ever got is through the Choctaw Academy. We have been as suspicious of the Indian Bureau as we are of the Jap, and frankly we don't have any use of John Collier. I want to say frankly that the representatives here from the Indian Service have raised your Department, in my estimation, one thousand per cent, and for the good and far-reaching benefit of this Congress and the intention of it I don't think it is healthy for any Department employee to hold a position in it, but I think that they should be members and even delegates of this Congress. And I want to express to you young men of the Department, my heart felt thanks and the thanks of the people you represent for your effort and untiring work of your people here.

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