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

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JUDGE JOHNSON: I think the approval of this resolution would be a mistake. Now, I am on record of opposing many of the things that the Indian Bureau has advocated, but I had better make the statement that I can see both sides of the questions. We are here meeting as Indians. The fact that the Indian may be an employee of the Federal Government should not preclude him from having membership in an organization that is for the benefit of Indians. Now, here we have adopted a Constitution which is crude, but we can make a better one. Now, we are starting out here and we need the fine ability and cooperation of these young men that are in the Indian Service. As Mr. Madrano said, the higher-ups formulate the policies of the Indian Department. I am sure that there are a lot of young people in the Office who do not approve of all the policies of the Indian Service. I think we have started out here and have made a splendid beginning. I feel that we ought not adopt this resolution. If later on it appears it should be adopted and the Convention says that we should adopt a resolution of this sort, then we can do it. Let us not put into this Constitution anything that will cause any discord.

MR. FISHER: Mr. Chairman, our friend, Robert Yellowtail, is not here, superintendent of the Crow Reservation, and when he speaks he says he is speaking as an Indian. When you ask him for the Indian Officer's interpretation on things, he says he is giving the Indian Office interpretation. I have had a lot to do with the Indian Office and I appreciate the help it has given to the Northern Cheyenne tribe. We have an organization out there and had some Government employees on that Council, and then out comes Department Order No. 1912 that throws us in a bad way. No Government employee didn't like the Indian Reorganization Act, they could just move on a give somebody else the room. We see those things. My friend here, George La Vatta, and my friend, this Flathead here helped me a lot. I say, let us move on providing the Indian Office does not throw in a stumbling block.

FRED MAHONE: I wish to say some few words, roughly I think because Judge Johnson has brought them to my mind. At this Convention here, I have seen and got acquainted with the well-educated Indians of America, and they are Government employees. And those men are well educated men and they are holding good jobs. Of course, they are holding good jobs for their side. But those men started this organization and it proves to be a strong meeting here in talking about an independent organization, and they are very strong men to carry out this organization that we are are going to have. Because in my reservation, there is an Oklahoma Indian that is holding a position now and another fellow who is Superintendent of the Suapal Indians, from Oklahoma, [[.]] Those kind of men are needed to be members of this organization, if they are going to make an independent organization. I believe that those men, who are employed in the Indian Service, they are going to make out some way so that they will be eligible for membership and support this organization.

JESSE ROWLIDGE: What effect will the Hatch Act have upon Indian Service employees serving in this organization?

MR. DWIGHT: My interpretation is that the Hatch Act will not have any effect on Indian Service employees belonging to an Indian organization.

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