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National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) records – Bellingham, WA: Proceedings, 1950

Extracted on Nov-29-2021 03:10:59

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Address By Frank George

Mr. President, Members of the Executive Council, fellow delegates and honored guests: I consider it a great compliment to the National Congress of American Indians to see you with us today. I appear before you with gratitude in my heart. I want to express appreciation for the interest in the National Congress of American Indians which your attendance here so amply demonstrates. Such an interest clearly implies that you are capably representing your people by bending all your efforts toward building a better and stronger vehicle to advance the common interests of Indianhood.

We bear a grave responsibility to Indianhood. For too many years this struggle has been working to a climax in our time. It has been a struggle of people against people, and ideals against ideals. We are now called upon to make decisions that will decide issues of far-reaching proportions. We should accept this challenge by all means. It is high time that Indians played a part in seeking solution to common problems.

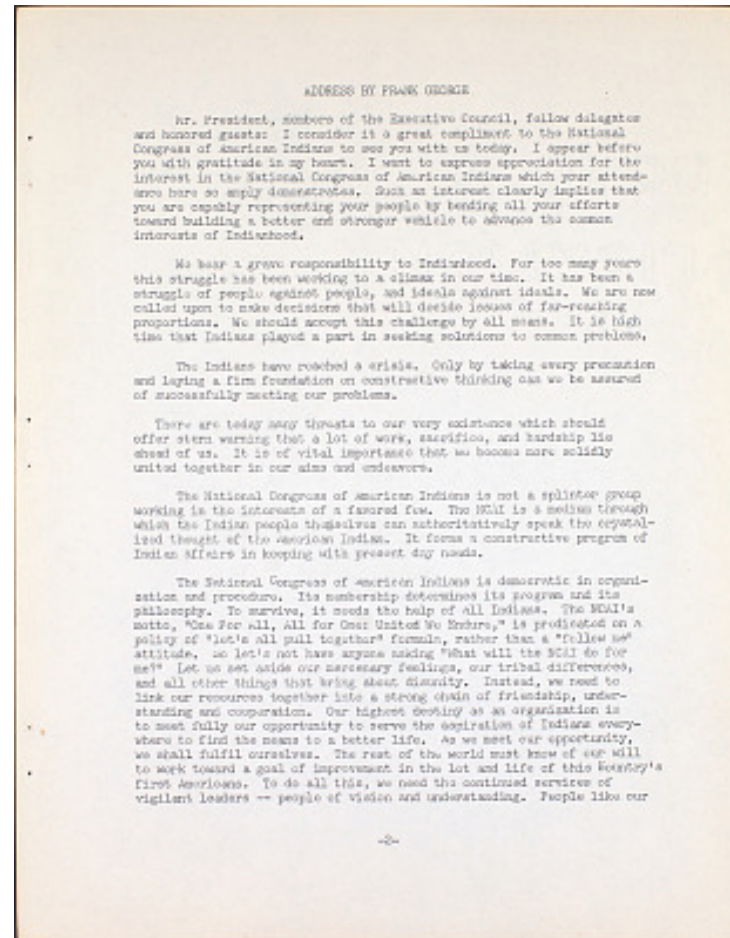
The Indians have reached a crisis. Only by taking every precaution and laying a firm foundation on constructive thinking can we be assured of successfully meeting our problems.

There are today many threats to our very existence which should offer stern warning that a lot of work, sacrifice, and hardship lie ahead of us. It is of vital importance that we become more solidly united together in our aims and endeavors.

The National Congress of American Indians is not a splinter group working in the interests of a favored few. The NCAI is a medium through which the Indian people themselves can authoritatively speak the crystalized thought of the American Indian. It forms a constructive program of Indian affairs in keeping with present day needs.

The National Congress of American Indians is democratic in organization and procedure. Its membership determines its program and its philosophy. To survive, it needs the help of all Indians. The NCAI's motto, "One for All, All for One: United We Endure," is predicated on a policy of "let's all pull together" formula, rather than a "follow me" attitude. So let's not have anyone asking "What will the NCAI do for me?" Let us set aside our mercenary feelings, our tribal differences, and all other things that bring about disunity. Instead, we need to link our resources together into a strong chain of friendship, understanding and cooperation. Our highest destiny as an organization is to meet fully our opportunity to serve the aspiration of Indians everywhere to find the means to a better life. As we meet our opportunity, we shall fulfil ourselves. The rest of the world must know of our will to work toward a goal of improvement in the lot and life of this country's first Americans. To do all this, we need the continued services of vigilant leaders -- people of vision and understanding. People like our

-2-



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