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National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center

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

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We will want to be assured that we will not be faced with a situation such as almost faced the Indians of California. Long range plans need long range financing. Enterprises must be carried on to completion. Six-year-old children must be guaranteed educational privileges on a par with their white brethren and until they are educated to the point that they are self-sufficient, as education is a basic need and will solve many of the so-called Indian problems.

We will want a plan that will guarantee our eventual divorce from wardship, yet which at the same time will not emancipate us out of our real estate. In fairness to the Government, I must say that it has also asked for Reservation plans, but that is not enough. We must arouse ourselves and make and execute our own plan. Our plan must stress education, consolidation of broken Indian lands into economically usable units and their retention, economic and social betterment, and, last but not least, must stress self-reliance. Our plan must not lead to dependence; we must get away from any idea that someone owes us a living forever, and we must proceed on the supposition that we eventually have to fend for ourselves. Our plan must find a wise use of per capita payments if made. Such payments and unearned moneys can, if wisely used, greatly help the conditions of the Indians, but, if unwisely used, can be nothing but a curse and will eventually lead to social destruction and can completely destroy initiative and self-reliance.

Our plan must not lead to eventual alienation of Indian lands. Land is now at a premium. We must support plans to acquire more land where needed, and to utilize to capacity the lands we now own. Our hope of acquiring more land is meager. Competition for a land base will increase. Phony emancipation bills, aimed at the eventual separation of the Indian from his land, must be defeated. It is reasonable to believe that there will be Indian people 25 or 50 years from now. We that are alive today owe to them the guarantee that their heritage will be preserved and land and other resources will not be dissipated by the present generation; that our children and our children's children will not become a landless group to perhaps wander to some urban community to become an isolated welfare problem. Some of our people should go to the cities, yes. Some will go and some have gone. But our plan must contemplate this, as many of our Reservations do not now and will not in the future support all their enrolled members. Help and guidance for those that are necessarily away from the Reservations to gain a livelihood, must be given. Permanent employment for those people is essential. They must be given opportunity to become professional men and skilled workmen. Those that now have nothing to do on the Reservations should be encouraged to find work where there is work. Many of our people have become more and more dependent. Many people blame this on the paternalism of the government. Other people say it is plain laziness. Whatever it is, a new outlook, and adult education as to our own responsibilities, are imperative.

Our plan must contemplate an exchange of ideas between reservations, on items of common welfare, and a unified plan of action initiated and

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We will want a plan that will guarantee our eventual divorce from wardship, yet which at the same time will not emancipate us out of our real estate. In fairness to the Government, I must say that it has also asked for Reservation plans, but that is not enough. We must arouse ourselves and make and execute our own plan. Our plan must stress education, consolidation of broken Indian lands into economically usable units and their retention, economic and social betterment, and, last but not least, must stress self-reliance. Our plan must not lead to dependence; we must get away from any idea that someone owes us a living forever, and we must proceed on the supposition that we eventually have to fend for ourselves. Our plan must find a wise use of per capita payments if made. Such payments and unearned moneys can, if wisely used, greatly help the conditions of the Indians, but, if unwisely used, can be nothing but a curse and will eventually lead to social destruction and can completely destroy initiative and self-reliance.

Our plan must not lead to eventual alienation of Indian lands. Land is now at a premium. We must support plans to acquire more land where needed, and to utilize to capacity the lands we now own. Our hope of acquiring more land is meager. Competition for a land base will increase. Phony emancipation bills, aimed at the eventual separation of the Indian from his land, must be defeated. It is reasonable to believe that there will be Indian people 25 or 50 years from now. We that are alive today owe to them the guarantee that their heritage will be preserved and land and other resources will not be dissipated by the present generation; that our children and our children's children will not become a landless group to perhaps wander to some urban community to become an isolated welfare problem. Some of our people should go to the cities, yes. Some will go and some have gone. But our plan must contemplate this, as many of our Reservations do not now and will not in the future support all their enrolled members. Help and guidance for those that are necessarily away from the Reservations to gain a livelihood, must be given. Permanent employment for those people is essential. They must be given opportunity to become professional men and skilled workmen. Those that now have nothing to do on the Reservations should be encouraged to find work where there is work. Many of our people have become more and more dependent. Many people blame this on the paternalism of the government. Other people say it is plain laziness. Whatever it is, a new outlook, and adult education as to our own responsibilities, are imperative.

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