

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
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Washington 6, D. C.

Darnton
AD 2-8978

FOR RELEASE MARCH 28, 1955

Washington, D. C. -- One group of Indians talked back to the Bureau of Indian Affairs here this week - and won the argument, the first in a long time to make such a stand, let alone to win.

A delegation from the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota, headed by Martin Cross, Chairman of the Tribal Council of the Three Affiliated Tribes, received a decision that frees, and allows them to use, approximately \$1,500,000 of the tribes' own 5½ million-dollar fund without having to agree to a termination of trusteeship with the United States Government. The decision was made by Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Glenn L. Emmons.

Per capita payments to members of the tribes out of the tribal funds had been frozen - though the 2800 people of the tribes were in need - because top officials in the Bureau had been trying to force the tribes' officials to agree to terminate the Government's protective arrangement as a precondition to Secretarial approval for a per capita distribution from the funds.

At least 2 "termination" bills had been presented to the Tribal Council during the last year and requests for Secretarial approval of per capita distribution from the tribes' own funds had been refused unless the Indians would accept the termination agreement.

The elected officials of the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, like the National Congress of American Indians of which the tribe is a member, believe that federal trusteeship, with especial reference to the trust title on the land,

should not be terminated until the Indians are better prepared to compete with white men for jobs, to develop their own resources, and similar things. In other words, until the Indians want and are ready for termination of the treaties. The Fort Berthold Council has laid out a plan providing for the betterment of the peoples of their tribes.

Five termination bills last year, affecting some 60 tribes, started in motion the scrapping of the protective treaties entered into between the tribes and the Government, transferring responsibilities for services from federal to state and county governments before either the Indians or their state and local communities were ready. The tribes affected were in Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin and Utah.

The Three Affiliated Tribes of the North Dakota delegation in Washington had the support of the Governor of North Dakota, Norman Brunsdale, and of their Senators and Representatives, Senator Milton R. Young and Senator William A. Langer and Rep. Usher L. Burdick and Rep. Otto Krueger.