

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE



new hydroelectric plant, among other things.

Mr. Clements gives Smith credit for the development of the private sector on the reservation. His overall leadership is excellent, Mr. Clements says. "He has led us here for 20 years, and is a strong man, with a good sense of direction," he adds. Another tribal official, who asked not to be named, says that he wonders sometimes if support for Mr. Smith is solid. "No matter what, they are partial to Ken Smith," this official said.

But despite their total official support for Smith, this official says that the tribal council's support of Interior Secretary James Watt is lukewarm. Several of the council members are anti-Watt, and the split is apparently about 50-50.

Mr. Clements says that Mr. Smith is answerable to his supervisor, Secretary Watt, and that his competence is judged by Mr. Watt. In response to a question about Mr. Smith's competence raised by Hazel Hertzberg in the

current New Republic magazine, Mr. Clements says Mr. Smith has to uphold the treaty obligations of the U.S. to the tribes.

He says Mr. Smith is trying a new approach to the "Indian problem" as it has been labeled. His approach is economic development, the creation of jobs on reservations. Mr. Clements thinks Indians should break the link with the federal government which says the government should provide jobs, housing, health care, education, and other things that Indian need.

One of the ways to do this, he says, is to make tribal governments responsible for their people's welfare. As a money manager, he adds, Mr. Smith is concerned with using federal funds the best way possible.

But despite the tribal council's strong support for Mr. Smith in general, they are on record as being opposed to Mr. Smith's most important proposal to Indian tribes—reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Mr. Clements said the council is

opposed to the present Smith plan, which calls for elimination of six of the 12 Area Offices, combining them with in the six that would be left.

This plan, now officially on hold, has been opposed by several other tribes and tribal organizations in the past year. When asked Mr. Smith's record on protection of Indian rights and resources, Mr. Clements said the tribes at Warm Springs are under tremendous pressure to give up some of their water. They have some creeks and a river flowing through the reservation, and people up the river from them, and down river, want more of their water.

Quantification—the dividing up of water on Indian lands—is going to happen, he says. Congress will eventually quantify Indian water, and give surplus water to people off the reservation, he asserts. To anticipate this eventuality, he said, the tribal council at Warm Springs has established a water code, and a water board which is charged with

counting up all the water on the reservation.

"We want to make sure we will have all the water we need," Mr. Clements says. The tribal council is looking at long term goals—five year plans and up to 20-year plans—to determine their water needs into the future, he adds.

Mr. Clements rates Mr. Smith's relations with tribes very highly. Indian leaders are beginning to understand Mr. Smith's concepts, he said, as evidenced by the response given him at the recent National Congress of American Indians meeting, and another important meeting recently held in Portland.

Mr. Clements states that the Assistant Secretary got off to a bad start in Indian country with his proposal to close several of the off-reservation boarding schools. He feels Mr. Smith was right in his decision to close them, although he later had to relent and change the decision because of political pressure from the tribes. He said Mr. Smith feels Indian children

should be educated at home, and not sent to boarding schools. Only about 50 out of 700 school children at Warm Springs attend boarding schools. Their dropout rate from high school is over 40 percent, he says, just a little higher than the national drop out rate for Indian students.

Mr. Clements says he and the other tribal council members feel the Reagan solution to the nation's economic problems will work, although it might take a long time. Asked how long it might take, he said seven to 10 years is the term they are expecting. "We think America is going to do OK," he stated.

The tribal official quoted earlier says Mr. Smith is an official Indian policy state-open and truthful person.

"He has to do a lot of things I would be afraid to do," he said, such as announce school closures, promote unpopular reorganization plans, and make talks to hostile audiences.

Mr. Smith has a difficult time getting through the maze of laws and regulations which Congress and the bureaucrats have made. The two tribal officials agree. They say he is determined to make the BIA more responsive to the Indian people it serves and to make it more dependable.

Mr. Smith does little talking to the press himself, and relies on his staff press officer. His office says that the issuing of a long-awaited earlier says Mr. Smith is an official Indian policy state-open and truthful person.

by Dr. Dean Chavers
While some tribal leaders around the nation have voiced their opposition to actions taken by the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Ken Smith, the tribal leadership on Mr. Smith's reservation totally supports him.

This is the report given by Mike Clements, one of 11 members of the tribal council at the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon. At 36 years of age, Mr. Clements says he is the youngest member of the tribal council, the official governing body of the reservation. The other members are in their 50s and 60s. Mr. Clements said he had

no idea what the party registration of the other members of the councils; he is an independent. "But we all voted for Reagan," he says.

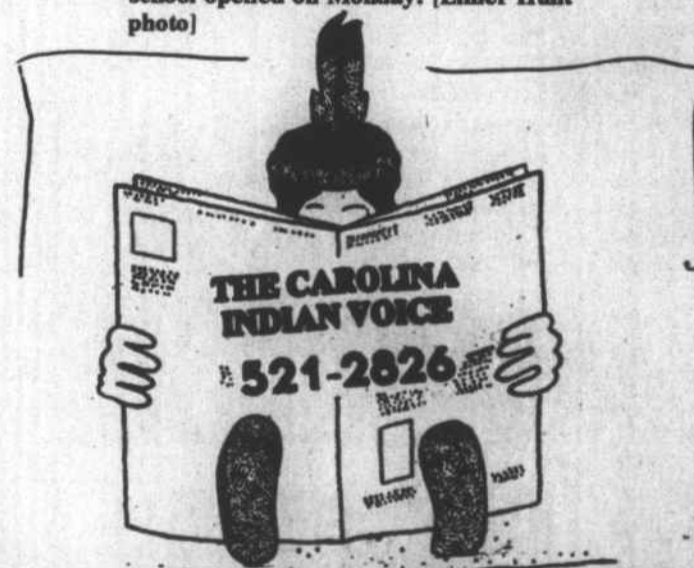
Mr. Smith, he said, has a really difficult job, and is not out to undermine Indian people. The tribal council is solidly behind Smith, and the tribes can keep their economy working with their own private sector funds, he adds.

The three tribes at Warm Springs—Warm Springs, Wasco, and Paiute—have several private sector enterprises which they operate. There is a timber and lumber operation, a tourist resort complex, and a

Prospect School Building Guttled By Fire



Fire gutted the inside of the original Prospect School on Thursday night. The fire was reportedly started by arson. The "white building" as it was called by the students, was presently being used as a junior high building. Although the walls still stand, the damage inside caused junior high students to be housed at Old Prospect United Methodist Church when school opened on Monday. (Elmer Hunt photo)



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