

**AROUND THE CAMPFIRE**

by Dr. Dean Chavers

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) wants to close all of its Indian schools, and may succeed in doing so under the Reagan administration, unless steps are taken to prevent this from happening.

There are three reasons BIA wants to close its schools. One is that BIA is in the Department of the Interior, which is more comfortable dealing with natural resources than with people. It has been reported that when the top-level BIA administrators gather, they talk about trees, oil, gas, land and other things that don't talk back; they avoid the topic of education whenever possible, because education deals with people, and people talk back.

Another is the expressed fear of many lower echelon BIA employees, such as teachers, principals, counselors, Education Program Administrators and others, that they might lose their jobs if Indians become educated. While their fear may or may not be justified, it is nonetheless real, and it is the quality of classroom instruction which determines whether or not education is successful.

The third reason is the commitment of top-level BIA and Interior political appointees to close the schools. These commitments, it is reported, have been made to certain Senators and Representatives who want the BIA out of the education business.

This last reason is most important, and leads to a Catch 22 situation. By the policies and procedures that are used to operate the schools and admit students, these same top-level political appointees, in conjunction with the Area Directors and others, can and do program the schools for failure, and then use this failure as an excuse to close the schools.

An example of this is the radical shift in the makeup of the student bodies of the various BIA schools in 1960 and in 1978, as reported in a BIA report by Dan Sahmaunt in 1979. In 1960, some 90 percent of students in BIA schools were in the schools because their homes were isolated from adequate educational facilities, and 10 percent were enrolled for educational or social reasons, such as educational or behavioral problems.

In 1978, only 10-15 percent of the students were enrolled because of being isolated from schools in their home communities; 20-25 percent were enrolled because of special educational needs; 15-20 percent were enrolled because of behavioral problems; and 50-60 percent were enrolled because of economic and social reasons.

The losers in this Catch 22 are, of course, Indian students and their parents. Because of the high enrollment of "problem" students, certain schools start to gain a reputation as being more like reformatories than like schools, and Indian parents who want the best education for their children will no longer let them attend the BIA schools. At the same time, middle-level BIA administrators allow these schools to become physically unsafe and notoriously ineffective, with the end result that Senators and Representatives, fed information by BIA officials, start to call for the closure of schools on the grounds that they are ineffective, too costly, and so on.

Indian people need to be aware of these developments, and be prepared to bring the case to the Congress for educational and social needs. As one former BIA official put it, we should be concerned that Indian children from large, poor families don't get sold down the river. The Congress and the political appointees in BIA and in Interior need to be made aware that for every Indian high school-age child in school, there is one not in school. What will happen to these out-of-school children?

Indian people are still poor and economically depressed. The newcomers to government under President Reagan will not understand the depths of Indian poverty or its ramifications. The Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT) and others have trumpeted the news about the billions of dollars in natural resources on Indian lands, and the newcomers may come to think that these resources are under the control of Indians or are benefiting Indians, both of which are untrue or only partly true. The knowledge about these resources may lead policy makers into thinking Indians have a stable, sound economic base, which is patently untrue.

But if they believe it, there is likely to be a concerted effort to cut back on Indian appropriations, under the rubric of self-sufficiency or self-reliance. The danger is that they may start to cut back on Federal dollars before Indian people have had a chance even to begin to build a sound economic base. The unemployment rate in Indian country continues to hover around 40 percent, and this fact should override all other considerations.

Instead of being cut back, Indian appropriations should be increased and redirected into providing a stable economic base and a sound educational system which will produce highly skilled young graduates.

As it has been said many times, our future is with the young people.

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are, making every effort possible to cut costs or make better management decisions which will result in increased yields or reduced costs. One way that many farmers throughout the state are approaching the need to reduce costs is to make certain that they apply exactly the plant nutrients that are needed, and no more, to the upcoming crop. Certainly the way that has been known for many years to accomplish this is to take a soil test. Then with the chemical analysis of each field's soil in hand and available for close scrutiny, a farmer can make excellent decisions relating to one of his largest costs -- that of fertilizer.

Last week while in Raleigh at the Pork Producers Conference, I drove over to the Soil Testing Laboratory to drop off a few samples from problem areas in some small grain fields in the county. Much to my amazement, as I drove to the loading dock at the Soil Testing Lab, the entire receiving deck was stacked three and four feet deep with soil samples. The receiving plant-form is about six feet wide and forty feet long. Naturally, one can readily realize that a tremendous number of soil samples are being taken from throughout the state and that the Testing Lab is absolutely being deluged with samples to be analyzed. They are running so far behind that they had even draped black polyurethane over the many boxes and postal bags that were jammed packed with small soil sample boxes. With this situation in mind, and the absolute need for every producer to make his very best management decisions this year, if anyone is planning to take additional soil tests for utilization in determining fertility needs this year, I strongly encourage getting out in those fields immediately and mailing them with all deliberate speed. Otherwise, the time required to get the sample analyzed will simply be too long and guesswork will again have to be utilized for 1981.

Certainly as Ray indicated, this year is no time for guessing, and prudence and expedition seems to be the route to follow in making decisions for 1981. Certainly as always, we have an excellent supply of soil testing materials at the Extension Office free of charge.

**Teenagers Receive Life Sentences**

LUMBERTON--Two Robeson County teenagers received life sentences last Friday after being found guilty of committing homosexual rape in the Robeson County jail.

The two young people -- Carl Glen Locklear, 16, and Leon Galbreath, 17, were found guilty by a jury and sentenced by Judge Coy Brewer to mandatory life sentences.

Attorneys representing both youngsters have filed notices of appeal.

The young people were convicted of forcing John Oliver, a 17 year old from Florida, to perform the sexual act. Another youngster, Curtis Malloy, not yet sentenced who pled guilty in the matter and testified against Locklear and Galbreath, faces a maximum sentence of 10 years on a crime against nature charge.

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In these days of high inflation and exorbitant interest rates, it seems that practically everything we need or want to purchase is higher than the last time we purchased the same item. Naturally, as everyone involved in farming knows, this situation exists most vividly in agriculture. Since most of our farmers experienced moderate to severe losses this past year, they are especially nervous as we approach a new planting season.

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Shown above, left to right, are Ms. John Wesley Dial; her daughter, Ms. Cammie Lowry, wife of the late Sterling Page Lowry of Wheaton, Maryland; Ms. Lowry's daughter, Ms. Doris Cummings, wife of Stacy Cummings of Maryland; Ms. Cummings' son, Stacy Cummings, Jr. of Maryland and the father of Wes Paul Cummings who is held by his paternal great-great grandmother, Ms. John Wesley Dial.

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