



# United States Department of the Interior

8118

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20245

REPLY REFER TO:

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

For Release April 28, 1981

Lovett 202/343-7445

STRONG, STABLE TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS STRESSED  
AT SMITH CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Ken Smith, a Wasco Indian from Oregon nominated by President Reagan to be the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, told members of the Senate Select Indian Affairs Committee his "beliefs and philosophy" on Indian matters at a confirmation hearing April 28.

With tribal council members from Smith's Warm Springs Reservation in full regalia in the hearing room, Smith expressed his belief "in the strengths of Indian people which have enabled them to endure and survive as a people through adversities and oppressions unparalleled in history."

Smith said that Indian people have the will and the ability to govern themselves and that tribal governments, not the Federal Government, have the "prime responsibility for improvement of their social and economic growth and development." He added that U.S./Indian relationships will be "stronger and more meaningful when Indian tribal governments are strong and stable and less dependent on Federal funds for operation of their governmental programs."

Smith's role in helping the Confederated Warm Springs Tribes to achieve strength and stability and to reduce dependence on Federal aid was noted by the other witnesses at the hearing.

Senator Mark Hatfield said: "As general manager (of the Confederated Tribes) for the past 10 years, Mr. Smith has utilized his managerial and organizational skills to make the reservation a model of economic success with more than 1,000 persons employed and an annual payroll of more than \$10 million."

Silas Whitman, a tribal council member from the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, said that Warm Springs has been a model for the Northwest tribes "as we prepare to go on a path of independence and self determination." He said that Smith has provided invaluable aid to neighboring tribes, especially helping the Nez Perce in the area of timber development.

Frank Lawrence, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, North Dakota, spoke for the National Congress of American Indians and the 16 tribes of the Aberdeen, South Dakota Area. He said, "We like his background. He is especially strong in economic development. This is greatly needed."

The chairman of the Warm Springs Confederated Tribes, Delbert Frank, said, "We are sorry to have Ken leave our organization, we believe that he is the best possible person to serve this country and the Indian people in this important position. Ken has built a strong management team at Warm Springs which will allow our tribes to continue to progress during the time for which we 'loan' him to you."

Smith, a graduate of the University of Oregon with a B.S. in Business Administration, went to work for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in 1959 as an accountant. He became head accountant, controller, assistant general manager, acting general manager and since 1971 has been general manager. He also served three years as an elected member of the tribal council.

In 1974 Smith was appointed to Task Force No. 7 of the American Indian Policy Review Commission, concerned with reservation development. He has been a member of the Oregon State Board of Education and has served on the board of Directors of the Portland Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. He is a director of the American Indian Travel Commission and the Intertribal Timber Council.

His nomination as Assistant Secretary was sent by the White House to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee April 14. His appointment must be confirmed by a vote of the full Senate before he can be sworn in and begin functioning as Assistant Secretary.

X X X

STATEMENT OF  
KENNETH L. SMITH  
THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINEE  
FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
BEFORE THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS  
APRIL 28, 1981

Mr. Chairman, I am Kenneth L. Smith, a Wasco Indian from Warm Springs, Oregon. It is a pleasure to be before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs today as President Reagan's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior.

First, I would like to thank the President and Secretary Watt for their support and confidence in me. Also I want to thank Senator Hatfield and all my friends for their support and encouragement.

Briefly, I would like to share with you my background and some of my philosophy on Indian Affairs.

I was born in The Dalles, Oregon and was raised by my grandparents on the Warm Springs Reservation in central Oregon. I attended the Warm Springs Boarding School through the sixth grade and then attended public school in Madras, Oregon, a town about 15 miles from the Reservation, where I graduated from high school in 1954.

In 1959, I graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and immediately went to work for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs as an accountant. Thereafter, I worked as Head Accountant, Controller, Assistant General Manager, Acting General Manager, and since 1971 as General Manager. I also served three years as an elected member of the Tribal Council.

During these years, we came a long way in the development of our Reservation. Major initiatives during these years included:

A long range comprehensive study of the human and natural resources which has been the blueprint for reservation development.

Financing and development of the Kah-nee-ta Vacation Resort.

Financing and development of the Warm Springs Forest Products Timber Complex.

Financing and development of electrical and telephone services throughout the Reservation.

Financing and development of a tribally owned low-head hydroelectric generating facility.

Construction of numerous housing and utility projects on the Reservation.

Expansion of our human resource programs for the benefit of our members.

I could go on, but the above items indicate that growth and development succeeded on the Warm Springs Reservation. Basically, it took strong tribal government and good management to achieve this success. I feel fortunate and proud to have been involved with this progress.

These 22 years have given me the management experience and insight to see true self-determination come about, economic development take place and consequently, less dependence on the Federal Government. That should be one of the major objectives of any community in the country whether a reservation community or otherwise.

I have been active in off-reservation affairs as well. In 1974, I was appointed to Task Force No. 7 of the American Indian Policy Review Commission which was concerned with reservation development. I served six years as a board member of the Oregon State Board of Education and five years on the Board of Directors of the Portland Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

I also am a Director of the American Indian Travel Commission and the Intertribal Timber Council.

Mr. Chairman, it is these business and management skills, demonstrated in the day-to-day, practical, real business world that I bring to the position of Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs.

Also important I think are the beliefs and philosophy I bring to the job.

I believe in the strengths of Indian people which have enabled them to endure and survive as a people through adversities and oppressions unparalleled in history.

I believe Indian people have the will and the ability to self-govern and exercise wisely their remaining sovereign powers within the framework of the Federal-tribal relationship.

I believe that the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of Indian people and their tribal governments must come from within, from their own will and determination.

I believe Indian people and their tribal governments, not the Federal Government, have the prime responsibility for improvement of their social and economic growth and development.

I believe the proper role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other Federal Agencies with their limited funding, is to encourage and foster an atmosphere that will enable tribal governments to move toward less dependency on the Federal Government as they seek to improve the social and economic conditions of their people.

I believe the goal of moving tribes away from dependence on the Federal Government is in complete accord with the existing government-to-government relationship and does not in any manner diminish or alter the Federal trust responsibility.

I believe the governmental and trust relationships will be stronger and more meaningful when Indian tribal governments are strong and stable and less dependent on Federal funds for operation of their governmental programs.

Mr. Chairman, I believe with my 22 years of experience in effective tribal management and economic development, that I can make a significant contribution to the position.

I welcome the challenge and opportunity to serve the Nation in its relationships with America's Indian Tribes.