

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF THE 58TH  
SESSION OF THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE:

Pursuant to the requirements of Senate Resolution No. 12, a Senate Resolution creating an Interim Committee on Indian Affairs to report to the next session of the legislature and authorizing the expenses thereof to be paid from the appropriation for legislative expense of the Senate.

I hereby transmit the following report of said Interim Committee to you.

Sincerely,  
GERALD T. MULLIN,  
Chairman.

REPORT

of the

SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

to the

1953 SESSION OF THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

*Membership*

Members of the Senate Interim Committee on Indian Affairs during 1951-52 were the following state senators:

Gerald T. Mullin, chairman, 35th District, Minneapolis.

Norman J. Larson, 64th District, Ada.

George O'Brien, 52nd District, Grand Rapids.

### *Background*

During the 1949 session of the State Legislature, members learned that the Federal Office of Indian Affairs was considering the closing of the Pipestone Indian School, and also that proposed Congressional appropriations for care of tubercular Indians in Minnesota would be insufficient. The Legislature therefore sent a six-member delegation to Washington to meet with members of Congress and federal officials. The delegation was successful in forestalling the closing of the Pipestone School and in securing adequate appropriations for care of tubercular Indians.

The interest thus generated in the Indian situation in Minnesota, combined with considerations in previous years for the welfare of the state's Indian population, brought about the formation of a Senate Interim Committee to investigate Indian affairs and report to the 1953 State Legislature.

This committee did so investigate and also instructed the Legislative Research Committee to draft an extensive study of Minnesota's Indian problem. Subsequently a full report, embodying a number of recommendations, was made to the 1951 Legislature. The House and Senate Welfare Committees then appointed a six-member Joint House and Senate Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs, which held several meetings during the 1951 session with state officials, and finally with representatives of the federal Indian Bureau. These meetings resulted in the adoption of a seven-point platform looking to alleviation of the Indian problem in Minnesota .

Before the close of the 1951 session, Senate Resolution No. 12, adopted April 18th, provided for continuance of the Senate Interim Committee on Indian Affairs, to pursue and effectuate the legislative program for the welfare of Minnesota Indians and report to the 1953 Legislature.

### *Legislative Program*

The seven-point legislative program agreed upon by the Joint House and Senate Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs and federal officials was as follows:

1. The Indian Bureau will endorse the appropriation of funds by Congress for payment of general relief or assistance to Minnesota Indians residing in distressed counties on tax-free land, but will not initiate such legislation.
2. The Indian Bureau will endorse repeal of the federal Indian Liquor Law and legislation delegating law enforcement power on Indian lands to the state.
3. The Indian Bureau will place greater emphasis on vocational education and will aid in obtaining funds.

4. The Indian Bureau has requested additional funds for on-the-job and apprenticeship training, and if approved, will allocate additional funds for use in Minnesota.

5. The Indian Bureau will request funds for a foster home program for the present residents of the Pipestone Indian School and other eligible children.

6. The Indian Bureau will request additional funds for more public health nursing services for Minnesota Indians.

7. The Indian Bureau has requested funds for more adequate medical and dental services for Minnesota Indians, and if granted, these programs will be expanded.

### *Interim Committee Activity*

Activity of the Senate Interim Committee on Indian Affairs during 1951-52 has centered around four major projects:

1. A plan for closing the Pipestone Indian School.
2. A plan for foster home care of Indian Children.
3. Obtaining general relief and assistance funds for Minnesota Indians from Congress.
4. Surveying the present Indian situation in Minnesota.

Pursuant to this activity, members of the Committee have held numerous meetings with state and federal officials concerned in the Indian situation, and with groups of interested citizens. Individual members of the Committee have appeared before Congressional appropriation committees in Washington, and have attended national conferences having to do with improvement of the Indians' welfare.

### *Accomplishments*

Working closely with the State Director of Social Welfare, the Committee has succeeded in obtaining a practical plan for closing of the Pipestone Indian School. The first meeting of the committee with the Congressional Delegation was held in the office of Senator Thye. All members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation were present. It was the intent of the federal Indian Bureau to close the school abruptly in June, 1952. This would have been disastrous, both for the some 115 Indian children in it at the time as well as for the county welfare agencies which would suddenly have been responsible for the care and support of the children without any advance preparation or financial provisions.

Members of the Committee, the State Welfare Director, members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation, the Secretary

of the Legislative Research Committee, and interested citizens met with federal Indian Bureau officials and members of House and Senate appropriation committees on three occasions in February and April, 1952. As a result of these meetings, the Indian Bureau agreed to continue the Pipestone School until June, 1953, and Congress appropriated \$234,981 for this purpose. During the negotiations with the Indian Bureau, the commissioner indicated that the Bureau would like to turn over the Pipestone facilities, without charge, to the State of Minnesota for whatever purpose the state might wish to make of them.

Closely related to the issue of closing the Pipestone Indian School, is the plan for foster care of Indian children. Such a plan, supported by Federal Indian funds, is in operation in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin plan was studied by agents of the Minnesota Division of Social Welfare early in 1952, and the Division subsequently drew up a plan for care of Minnesota Indian children in foster boarding homes. The Division and the Indian Bureau eventually got together on a plan acceptable to both, and the Director of Social Welfare entered into a contract with the Bureau for foster care of dependent and neglected Indian children who are residents of Minnesota. Of the \$234,981 appropriated for the Pipestone School, the Committee arranged to have \$72,231 diverted to the foster home program and this amount was agreed upon in the contract. The special foster home program was limited to the five counties having the major Indian population: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Mahnomen and Mille Lacs. The plan has been in operation since October, 1952, and it is anticipated that by the end of the 1953 school year in June, all children in the Pipestone School will have been placed in foster homes. The well-being of the children will thus have been soundly provided for, and there will be no insurmountable financial burden abruptly placed on the counties.

In its meetings with members of Congress, the Committee also sought to have funds set up for general relief and assistance to Minnesota Indians. This is a particularly pressing problem because for years the counties with heavy Indian populations have carried the Indian relief load by themselves, and these same counties are the ones least able financially to carry the burden. Although the Senate Appropriation Committee agreed to appropriate such funds, the House Committee did not, with the result that the counties will have to continue to carry the Indian relief load.

A special study of Indian welfare in Minnesota was encouraged by the Interim Committee. This study was undertaken by the Bemidji Civic and Commerce Association Tax Committee in cooperation with the State Division of Social Welfare. The study encompassed an 11-county area with large Indian population: Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Cook,

Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnomen, Mille Lacs, and St. Louis. Some of the findings of this report are as follows:

The committee is in no position to report on the Indian problem as a whole, and they are therefore confining their remarks and recommendations to the Indian population living in the eleven-county area in Northern Minnesota.

There are in this area endless problems, such as education, health, employment, and welfare that can only be corrected by correcting the basic reason that brought about the problems. When Indians are given full citizenship, with its attendant responsibilities, these problems will find their answers in the same degree they are answered in the balance of the population.

It is very apparent that the present system of closed reservations, federal doles, and welfare payments have not only failed to accomplish the desired objectives of making the Indian a full citizen, but have strengthened in his mind the belief that he has been treated unfairly, and that he is entitled to more aids than he is now getting.

Very few Indians will take jobs, and those that do, hold them for short periods only. Many of them capable of holding jobs quit and return to the reservation in the belief that division of lands and moneys due them will be more than they can accumulate working outside the reservation.

Because the Indian believes these lands and moneys are due him; and he will be taken care of with federal doles and welfare payments, there is no incentive for him to make any effort to accept his responsibility as a citizen. In fact, any person or race would soon drop back to the Indian level if this incentive were removed.

It is the general opinion in this area that the federal government should be responsible for the entire Indian Social Security cost.

It is the belief of the committee that this would only perpetuate the present system. Those who live close to the Indians are now the ones who are urging a definite and final settlement of the whole question, and their interest is mostly in proportion to what the present situation is costing them.

If, and when, the federal government relinquishes its control over the Indian, they will become citizens of the state, and for this reason the state should take a more active part in trying to arrive at the ultimate solution.

The federal government should increase its Social Security contributions to seventy-five per cent of the total cost, with the state paying the balance; and the state's share should be levied

equally over the state as a whole rather than a large per cent being collected from counties where the Indian population resides.

We also recommend that a further study be made of each area owned by Indians, as to natural resources and markets, and a certain amount of moneys due them set aside to form Indian corporations that will create mechanical and manual work for these people.

We would suggest a "Celetex" wall board type plant, because of the unlimited quantities of pulp wood. Also, we suggest a study be made as to economic possibilities of a freezing and packaging plant for their commercial fishing industry to permit the fish to be sold the year around at higher prices.

This plant could also freeze and package berries during season, resulting in an increased labor market.

Prior to the coming of the white man, the Indian made a living and carried on a form of government under extremely adverse conditions, in fact, the Indian had to teach the white man many things for his survival. The committee believes the Indian can assume full citizenship if given the same incentive or the need to work for his own salvation. To make people trustworthy, you must trust them.

### *Recommendations*

The Senate Interim Committee on Indian Affairs makes the following recommendations looking toward the betterment of Indian conditions in Minnesota:

1. That the 1953 session of the State Legislature endorse the foster home program now in operation for care of dependent and neglected Indian children.
2. That the Legislature take steps to secure the facilities of the Pipestone Indian School from the federal Indian Bureau, and place responsibility for operation and maintenance of the facility either with the State Division of Social Welfare, or Public Institutions, depending on the use to which such facility may be put. Further, that the Pipestone facility be used for some other purpose than care of Indians, for which its use is not practicable.
3. That the Legislature appoint a joint committee to investigate possible uses for the Pipestone facility, and duly make report prior to the closing of the 1953 session.
4. That the Legislature appropriate a sum adequate to operate and maintain the Pipestone facility during the biennium for what use is determined.

5. That the Legislature take steps to secure the property of the Indian Wing at the State Sanatorium from the federal Indian Bureau, which Bureau has indicated its willingness to turn the facility over to the State of Minnesota without charge.

6. That the committee appointed by the Legislature to investigate the use of Pipestone also be charged with investigating the cost of maintaining the Indian Wing at the State Sanatorium, and report on findings prior to the close of the session.

7. That the Legislature appropriate a sum sufficient to operate and maintain said Indian Wing for the succeeding biennium.

8. That an Interim Committee on Indian Affairs be appointed and allocated sufficient funds to:

a. Appear before Congressional committees to secure further appropriations to continue the foster home program for dependent and neglected Indian children.

b. Appear before Congressional committees to secure federal funds for general relief and assistance to Minnesota Indians.

c. Investigate the condition of vocational education for Indians in Minnesota, on-the-job and apprenticeship training, public health nursing services, and medical and dental services.

d. Where indicated by results of said investigation, seek such additional funds from Congress as appear necessary.

e. Work with the Minnesota Congressional delegation in securing repeal of the federal Indian Liquor Law, and legislation delegating law enforcement power on Indian Lands to the state.

9. That the Interim Committee report to the 1955 State Legislature on its findings and results of its activities.

10. That the Legislature pass a resolution requesting the Minnesota Congressional delegation to extend all possible aid to representatives of the State Legislature who seek federal funds or legislation.

Gerald T. Mullin, Chairman

George O'Brien

Norman J. Larson

Mr. Mullin moved that the foregoing Interim Committee Report be printed in the Journal.

Which motion prevailed.