

SUMMARY OF 1954 LEGISLATION

Six laws providing for eventual termination of Bureau land trusteeship and services in specific tribal jurisdictions were passed in 1954. Groups affected were (1) the Menominees of Wisconsin, (2) the Klamaths of Oregon, (3) the Alabama and Coushatta Tribes of Texas, (4) four small and scattered bands of Paiutes in Utah, (5) about 60 small bands and tribes in western Oregon, and (6) the so-called "mixed blood" group on the Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah. All six pieces of legislation were thoroughly discussed with the affected Indian groups and were endorsed by them prior to enactment. The period provided for winding up Bureau responsibilities ranges from two years in the western Oregon enactment to seven years in the Uintah-Ouray legislation. Altogether the laws cover about 8,000 Indians and roughly 1,500,000 acres of Indian trust land.

Additional termination bills were introduced covering the Indians of California and New York, the Flatheads of Montana, the Turtle Mountain Chippewas of North Dakota, the Seminoles of Florida, four small tribes in Kansas and Nebraska, the Makahs of western Washington, and several Nevada bands or tribes. Although hearings were held on all of these bills except the one affecting New York Indians, none reached the stage of enactment.

Legislation providing for transfer of the entire Indian Bureau health program to the United States Public Health Service on July 1, 1955 was approved by President Eisenhower on August 5, 1954. Involved in the transfer were 59 hospitals in the United States and roughly 25 percent of the Indian Bureau's total personnel. The legislation was endorsed by the Bureau prior to enactment and was favored by a substantial number of Indian tribal groups.

Similar legislation providing for a transfer of the Bureau's agricultural extension program to the Department of Agriculture failed of enactment.