

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS, ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES:

--National Congress of American Indians. They have a Washington address. We have about 68 tribes--got over 200 tribes represented now. We're having a convention in Omaha. I wish you could attend that. And at that time we bring up some of those questions pertinent to our local problems. Now, here the fire tribes of the southern Plains Indians--as close as we lived together for many years, and as close as our reservations are--our problems are somewhat different, including our customs. Course there are lot of intermixture, amalgamated in the tribes, that knows Kiowa problems if they're part Kiowa, and part Comanche, or part Arapahoes and part Cheyennes. Even among us Cheyennes and Arapahoes that have lived for centuries together, outside of amalgamation--intermarriage--the customs of the Cheyennes--traditions they are governed by--sacred arrows. They lost two of those arrows. We're not supposed to talk much about them. But they replaced them by substitution of the hand made arrows. And that's what goes on every year--they rededicate them, fumigate them and offer their prayers--those things that helps to make their problems derive from a sacred source. They believe it. We Arapahoes, we have a petrified pipe in a bundle with a petrified turtle shell and a petrified ear of corn and a petrified duck's bill and a leaf. You know--one one bundle that's been preserved by the tribe and never has been molested by any white men or any other nations, that would confiscate them like they did the Kiowa doll (referring to the loss of the Taime) and the Cheyenne arrows. We have them all complete.

(What does this National Congress of American Indians--what is it, basically, that they're trying to do?)

Well, for many years--I been a member since 1914 or 1915 I believe--my father-in-law was the first President. Sherman Coolidge. He was an Episcopalian father. Full-blood captive. Married a white woman. Studied many strict-- And he founded that. He founded a church at Ethete, Wyoming, named that as the Episcopalian Mission. And founded a Boy's School there. And the churches there--all the accommodations for Indians there, through the Post Office.

(Did you say he was one of the ones that started this National Congress of American Indians?)