

Continuing a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Oaks. See T-287 Side B, for first part

### TRIBAL AFFAIRS

(Mr. Oaks was just talking about the plan - that's before the Choctaw tribe whether they want to keep the same kind of - what did you say, Mr. Oaks - what is the plan that you are under now concerning the tribe?)

Well, you have to deal with tribal affairs (Too much static for complete answer.) And take care of tribal funds, and look after property and things.

(So actually, the chief then, Jimmie Belvin, is our representative to work with the government on it. Is that right?)

Yes. He's our governor. All the authority - about all he has to do with it is to sign documents - they sell a little piece of land occasionally, and have sold some - he has to sign all those things. Leases, you know, some of it is grazing leases, some of it is oil and gas leases - that's about all authority he has. He has some interest all right. (Much static here and lost a sentence) but he can recommend.

(He can recommend but he can't sell or buy or - this can only be done - does the government do it without the say-so of the Choctaws?)

Oh, they - reckon they like to consult with 'em and find out. They don't force anything on us. "Course if you read right about those things - the government wants to get loose from those things. Not only us, but the whole - all the tribes all over the United States, and there are a lot of 'em. Government wants to get away from all that. And they decided that the Choctaws and Chickasaws, about the most enlightened tribes of any of them. So, they just thought that they'd try to get this over on us. They are not trying to force us into it. They are tryin' to get out a questionnaire in voting - get our sentiment on it. If we are in favor of it, well all right. If we are not, well, I don't know what they are going to do about it.

(Seem fair enough doesn't it? ) (To vote on it?)

But the general theory is that the government wants to get loose from the Indians.

(Well, if they - if enough Choctaws chose to change the plan of operation, then wouldn't they be conducting any business at a cost to the tribe that they don't have now?)

Well, that is one objection I have to that - is that if we adopt that plan, we got to pay for everything. We got to elect some directors of that outfit - got to have some lawyers. And we gotta have a governor - not necessarily have a governor. I think the law says that we can if we are a mind to have a governor. But as it is, you see, the government is paying all that. We have a tribal attorney and he lives here in Hugo now. He is an old attorney - Sybil - he's got so old he is about to give it up. Jimmie appointed - had to go on trail here in Hugo and - we've got quite a lot of law-suits against the government that's in process - oh, some of 'em been in there - oh, 60 years