

JESS'S INVOLVEMENT IN TRIBAL POLITICS:

(How long did you serve?)

ABout fifty-six years. I wrote this Constitution and By-Laws and all legislation in Washington affecting any tribes, including us--the Cheyenne-Apahoese-- We were sent up there. Sometimes I'd be alone up there, appearing before the Committees of Congress--Senate and House--on legislation which we're interested in. I spoke many, many times before Committees. And I helped--you might say I was instrumental in passing those laws affecting Oklahoma Indians. And then on the basis of those acts of Congress we established our Constitution and By-laws and all our problems (?) that were established were based on acts of Congress. But I thought--I kept telling them-- Well, I retired once in '38, after I wrote the Constitution and we adopted it, went on it, I said--"Let's have some new blood in the tribal representation. I'm getting old and the younger ones ought to get in there and get trained." I already had trained three or four boys--well-trained. Well, they accepted my resignation, but within a year they called me back. So I went back into the Committee again--from '38 to '57. The from '57 I said, "I'm gonna retire now."

(Why did you retire in '57?)

Well, I thought I was getting old and a lot of young ones ought to be trained. A good many had already got started, you know, and they were interested and I thought maybe they were advised--trained well enough to go on with it. Because in summer time, during all those fifty-six or fifty-seven years that I was active--I might be in Wyoming. I might be in New Mexico. I might be in Wisconsin. I might be in Montana. During the summer months, especially--the latter part of June, July, and August--well I'd no sooner get started enjoying myself than I get a notice of something taking place here down in this part of the country needing the Committee's action, and I have to break all my plans and come on home. Sometimes I'd be in El Paso, Old Mexico--traveling and enjoying myself for the summer. So I thought, "Well, from here on I'll just retire." Of course they objected. I said, "No, I'm determined. At special times when I'm needed I'll respond to you people. But not during the summer. And not too regular. But in cases where there's involved problems, and you need my help, I'll