

voted against the best interests of the majority of their constituents for reasons of personal financial gain.

A few Indians stated that it was customary for a man to be elected to the Tribal Council, disappear from local affairs, and suddenly become wealthy. They maintained that Councilmen use their influence to secure long-term tribal loans for themselves and their relatives, and participate in other benefits as well. One experienced Sioux politician reasoned that a proposal to reduce the number of Tribal Council representatives to twelve was a bad idea, because twelve would be too easy to bribe. Many Indians complain that the Tribal Council serves the interest of a relatively well-to-do segment of the Tribe. Tribal regulations allow cattle operators who are enrolled in the Tribe to lease land from fellow Indians at a lower rate than the landowners could get by leasing to the highest bidder. A small percentage is taken from individual lease payments by the Tribal Council to finance programs that many landowners claim to get no benefit from. There is a group of landowners who for the last few years have been actively working to bring about the abolition of the Tribal Council by public referendum.

It would be unfair to assume, however, that most Tribal Council representatives feel no responsibility to the people who elected them. The Tribal Council, as the official governing body of the Oglala Sioux, can deal with Government agencies and private organizations who have goods and services to offer the Sioux. Candidates for the Tribal Council are selected largely on how well their constituents think they will perform at getting goods and services that will benefit their districts. A Councilman should be able to acquit himself well with whites, both to be able to get things from them and to act as whites expect people to act, so as not to "give the Tribe a black eye." For example, an incumbent politician whose public drunkenness had, in the opinion of many Sioux brought dishonor to the Tribe, was not returned to office, though he was respected for his generosity in many areas.

Many, perhaps most, of the "real" leaders on the reservation—those people whose opinions are sought and respected in local affairs—have never run for tribal office. For one thing, the role the Councilman is supposed to play is distasteful to many traditional Sioux. For another, the style of democracy that requires a man to stand before his people and argue for their votes goes against their ideals of modesty and reticence. Many Sioux, both "traditional" and "progressive", disdain the Council because it lacks the power to stand up to the BIA. Some blame the Councilmen and cite old leaders who, they claim, would not have been so acquiescent. Some blame the constitution, which they say makes the Council a rubber-stamp of BIA. Perhaps most important, until recently, the stakes have not seemed high enough to be worth the trouble. Because the Council has no power, little of significance comes of tribal politics, and few people get very excited over it. This situation may change, however, since the Council may gain at least partial control over the local Community Action Agency (Office of Economic Development (OED)). In the 1966 Tribal Council election, reportedly voter turnout was some 25% higher than usual, and almost twice the usual number of candidates ran for office.

Malan and Schusky (1962), state that in 1956 the average annual income of Pine Ridge Reservation family heads was \$1,110, and even this low figure is inflated by a small number of individuals who had made land sales that year, giving them an annual income for that year of over \$10,000. More recent income data is unavailable, but it seems unlikely that income levels are appreciably higher. The Wright-McGill fishhook snelling plant at Pine Ridge town and other reservations locations now employs about two-hundred people, at \$50 a week, nine months of the year. Recent Government construction, first of public housing, then of the building that houses the post office and community center has created many temporary jobs. As of 23 March 1966 the OED was employing nearly 250 people, most of them at \$1.25 per hour. However, during the same period mechanization ended many farming and ranching jobs near the reservation. Malan and Schusky (1962) report that of the 48% of heads of families on the reservation who were employed during the year, half of these worked as unskilled farm labor. Unofficial estimates by welfare workers in Pine Ridge indicate that almost one-quarter of these jobs have disappeared in the last ten years. Of 125 Pine Ridge Sioux interviewed by HSR researchers, 85% thought that life was harder in 1966 than ten years ago. All but four of the rest thought it was about the same.