

Center, were discussed to select those that were both most necessary in the light of current reservation needs and most likely to be funded under the expected Economic Opportunity Act. The Executive Committee, in consultation with Mr. Schifter and representatives from the BIA and PHS at Pine Ridge, decided to try initially to develop proposals for a Day Care Center, Community Health Aides, and a Neighborhood Youth Corps activity. Tribal Council minutes for 13 May 1964 show that on that day Mr. Schifter sketched the outline for Day Care Centers to the Council, and asked whether the Council approved. The response was almost unanimous approval. He also described an NYC program, and the Health Aides plan, and the Council approved both. A member of the Executive Committee stated that because of the need for haste in preparing applications for funds, project plans had to be designed "behind closed doors" without participation by the people.

Mr. Schifter contacted a child development specialist, Dr. Harold Abel, to discuss the Day Care Center plans. Dr. Abel urged the inclusion of Nursery Schools, which would be of more benefit than the Day Care Centers, which were designated merely to look after the children.

According to Tribal Council minutes, on 24 June 1964 Mr. Schifter gave a brief report to the Tribal Council concerning President Johnson, the Poverty Program, and opportunities for the Tribe. From the minutes of 25 June:

"Mr. Richard Schifter explained the various phases of the Anti-Poverty Bill and it was the recommendation of the Council that Phase 1a and 1b be acceptable to the reservation for a possible program."

In early August of 1964, Dr. Robert Roessel reportedly visited the Pine Ridge Reservation to discuss the "War on Poverty" for the first time. The Council was not formally in session, but a special session was convened to hear him speak. No minutes were taken, but according to a number of observers, Dr. Roessel explained that the Community Action Program was to be unlike any Government program that had gone before. It was to belong to the people. A community could write up a request for a project to develop itself, and OEO would provide the funds and skills to meet the request. Building materials and supplies were to be made available through the OEO. The program would hire members of the community to carry out the community's plans. Reportedly, when Dr. Roessel finished speaking, one of the non-Council members among those who gathered asked him if what he had described would really happen, because what he had said sounded almost too beautiful to be true. Dr. Roessel is said to have replied that not all of the plans could be put into effect at once, that the projects would have to be done in phases, but that OEO would help the Indian communities in every way possible.

It is possible that the specific remarks attributed to Dr. Roessel were not made by him. Whatever he said in fact, from all accounts the effect of his words was to create near euphoria. Dr. Roessel also spoke upon this occasion and on subsequent visits, to reservation leaders and at district meetings. Word of OEO spread quickly, and in many, if not all, areas of the reservation, expectations were high. On Dr. Roessel's recommendation, the Tribal Council formed an OEO committee, with representatives from the largest communities on the reservation.

Individual communities organized themselves to devise plans to submit to Washington. The plan of Oglala Junior, a "full-blood" community, describes and budgets over twenty projects, including cattle and farming enterprises, adult education, on-the-job training, self-help housing, tourist development, and sanitation.

The proposals written by Oglala Junior are similar to those written by the White River and Kyle communities. The people of Kyle reportedly desired: (1) equipment to irrigate home and communal garden plots, and equipment for a small community cannery, so that wild and garden products could be preserved for domestic consumption; (2) equipment for a small sawmill, so that tribal timber could be selectively used for homes for young families; and (3) sewing machines and instruction in dress-making.

Oglala Junior submitted its proposals to OEO in Washington on 24 August 1964. They were rejected on the grounds that proposals must come through the CAP being set up under the sponsorship of the Tribal Council to cover the entire reservation. The other proposals were apparently given to the OEO committee, who in turn handed them over to the Community Workers when that component was funded. Apparently some were later forwarded to the Vermillion office of the Consortium, but reactions from Vermillion, if any, are unknown.