

Government under the Indian Reorganization Act has been only nominal. The tribal, reservation, and village governmental units have been without the usual accouterments of government, lacking police, judicial, and taxing powers. The schools operate with curricula established by the State, with teachers hired according to state certification criteria, with funds collected by governments over which the Indian school boards, where they exist, have no control. The high schools are operated by systems in which the Indians have no more voice than ordinary citizens, and, in actual fact, less. The police and judiciary are under state and county control, with personnel drawn from the white communities, operating with laws based on middle class urban white behavior. Taxation is by Federal, state and county agencies, in which the Indian has little voice. Rules concerning hunting and harvesting of wild rice are made by the State Conservation Department. Complaints of prejudice and discrimination may be reported to the Governor's Commission on Human Rights, the State Commission Against Discrimination, or the Minnesota Advisory Commission to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, but without noticeable results.

To the extent that the TEC, RBC, or village councils have any authority, they can exercise it only with approval of other governmental agencies, principally the BIA. Even the CAP, which the Indians have been told is "their program," must conform to Federal requirements, and its components are limited to what the operational authorities of OEO authorize.

It is not, then, without good cause that the people of the reservation assert that the TEC and the RBC do little or nothing for them, and have not contributed to establishment of a sound economic base for the population. TEC and RBC responsibility, authority, and resources are too limited for the tasks involved, though this is seldom recognized by many people.

Criticisms of the RBC are on the order of accusations of inefficiency, incapability, self-interest, and even dishonesty. The comment most frequently encountered is that the RBC does little or nothing of value, but uses limited tribal income needlessly. Another common statement is that the RBC does not really represent the people, and judged by the number who make the statement, it is likely to be true, notwithstanding the fact that its members are elected and reelected. Never has a formal charge or evidence been presented to indicate that the RBC membership is dishonest.

The significance of the charges is to be found in some of the information given above:

1. Kinship is important, and one's first responsibility is to assist relatives. Hence it is accepted that an RBC member will give preference to aiding a kinsman rather than non-kin. A charge of nepotism, true or not, will be widely believed.

2. People elected to the RBC tend to be above average in economic status. Their economic positions become *prima facie* evidence that they have "lined their own pockets" with tribal or reservation funds, irrespective of any valid evidence.

3. Widespread inter-personal and inter-group hostility leads to suspicion of malfeasance or subterfuge on the part of the successful, and to ready acceptance of any articulated charges against the individual, regardless of evidence.

4. The success of an individual is believed to be at the expense of those less successful. Gossip leads to statements by some that "they don't want anyone to get ahead."

5. Negative comments made about most of the successful are widespread and lead to the refusal of some to "try to get ahead" or to participate in civic or political activity.

The charges made against persons involved in political activity are thus symptomatic of the structural features and tensions of social life rather than statements of objective fact.

Before offering summary comments on the political system, brief attention to demography is necessary. A distribution curve of White Earth population will show that there are high numbers of children, adolescents and old people. The category of young adults shows an unusually low frequency, and an investigation indicates that many of these leave to find employment, few with high school or college educations remaining on the reservation. Those with skills and abilities indicated by graduation from high school or attendance at college, who return to reservation villages, are almost invariably employed in Government jobs (now including CAP) which prohibit political activity. The legal prohibition is, of course, reinforced by local attitudes and accusations