

With a history of numerous unfulfilled plans, little enthusiasm was generated in the reservation for a Community Action Program. Robert Treuer, of the Minnesota Agency of the BIA at Bemidji, was detailed by the BIA to assist the reservations in developing CAPs. It is due largely to his efforts and work with the reservation committees that plans for CAPs were eventually completed and submitted to OEO in the fall of 1964. After the applications were submitted, OEO published appropriate forms, which were forwarded with the returned applications to the RBC in early February 1965. The applications were rewritten on these forms, in accord with new instructions and with help of an OEO official, and were again submitted to OEO in February.

The period of January–February 1965 was apparently frantic, as the proposals were being rewritten in order that they might be, at OEO's request, approved for public announcement on Washington's birthday. Supporting letters had also to be obtained, relevant to the non-Federal share and support of the various social organizations of the area. On 17 February, while all members of the TEC were in Bemidji for a conference, they learned the Minnesota Ojibwa proposals "were in trouble." The TEC authorized an immediate trip to Washington for the President and Treasurer of the Tribe, who were accompanied by the BIA liaison man. In Washington, visits were made to the offices of both Minnesota senators and the Vice-President, as a result of which commitments for funding were obtained and formal announcement to this effect made in early March.

Several points are clear from the evidence pertaining to the origin of the White Earth CAP: (1) great pressure was placed upon the reservations to apply for a CAP; (2) pressure was placed to ensure application at an early date; (3) target dates were sufficient to prevent "community involvement" in the inception of the CAP; (4) administrative features in Washington almost caused abandonment of several applications; (5) the CAP was locally identified with the RBC; and (6) the value of Congressional pressure in overcoming bureaucratic inertia became clear.

The funding of the White Earth CAP became effective as of April 1965, but the CAP was not effectively operational until the beginning of June. The delay was due to the necessity of "getting organized"—hiring the initial minimal staff, particularly administrative, and making final arrangements for use of physical facilities.

An instance of early confusion for which the CAP has been incorrectly blamed may be found in the onset of the Head Start component. The CAP Director assumed office in early June, at which time Head Start was already operational. The sequence of events was as follows: First, the Head Start component at White Earth village was applied for by the School Board, after members had learned of it and had seen a demonstration in Bemidji. By the time Head Start was approved, a "political revolution" had changed the composition of the Board and the new members were largely ignorant of the nature of the intended program. In addition, the late date of actual funding made it difficult to secure the services of a teacher, although the Board did eventually obtain one. The inadequacy of the Head Start component can be blamed on the personnel turnover of the Board, and the late date of financing. When Head Start began, the new CAP Administrative staff was assuming office and was largely concerned with learning its responsibilities and "getting organized." It was not until later that the CAP became aware that it was the sponsor of Head Start, but the opportunity for control had passed.

Before considering the initial organization and development of the CAP, it is worthwhile to consider the problems of the reservation, as viewed by different segments of the population, and the publicly stated aims of OEO and its local representatives relative to problems of "the poor" on the reservation.

The overwhelming majority of articulate members of the Ojibwa communities are virtually unanimous in pointing to the following aspects of White Earth problems: The most important problem is unemployment, and the lack of employment opportunities in the vicinity of the reservation. While this is also a problem for white communities on and near the reservation, that is of little concern, if known, to the Indians. The majority (60%) of the Indian labor force is unemployed, and large numbers have left the reservation to obtain jobs in the Twin Cities and elsewhere. It is felt that nearly all who have left would return immediately if jobs were available, as they do return when unemployed, when sick, for vacations, and for many other reasons.

Those who have left include many of the best educated in terms of years of education or developed skills. One RBC member pointed out that of the thirteen