

otherwise question the integrity of State judicial administration. The estates of Palm Springs Indians are administered in the same manner, under the same laws and through the same judicial officers as would be the case for any of the other 16 million citizens of California whose affairs become subject to court supervision. This is entirely consistent with the general objective of bringing the Indian population into the framework of American society. As I view it, our responsibility rests with the assurance that Indian estates are properly protected against waste or dissipation. This is adequately guaranteed by the substantial fidelity bond which must be furnished by every person appointed to act as conservator or trustee under court supervision.

If the information brought to your attention is considered to reflect seriously upon the administration of California justice, the only proper course would seem to be that of placing it before the proper State Government authorities for proceedings in accordance with its law.

You will be informed of the results of our review of the study concerning fees after it has been completed.

Sincerely yours,

STEWART L. UDALL,
Secretary of the Interior.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C., August 22, 1962.

Hon. STEWART L. UDALL,
Secretary of the Interior,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: We have received your letter of August 13, 1962, replying to the Committee's letter of July 5th, both dealing with the handling of the lands of the Agua Caliente band of Mission Indians at Palm Springs, California. We look forward to receiving the results of your review based upon Items 4, 6, 7, and 9 of the July 5th letter.

On the other hand, we believe that the hands off attitude of the Department with respect to the other items in the July 5th letter is not well advised. Administrators and conservators of the Indians' estates were appointed pursuant to Section 4 of Public Law 86-339 of September 21, 1959 (79 Stat. 603). That section reads:

"The Secretary shall request the appointment of a guardian of the estate of all minor allottees and for those adult allottees who in his judgment are in need of assistance in handling their affairs in accordance with applicable State laws before making any equalization allotment or payment to such persons."

We are informed that following the enactment of this law agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs played an extremely active part in persuading various Indians to consent to the appointment of guardians. Under these circumstances, the Department of the Interior cannot divorce itself from responsibility in connection with them.

The assertion that you have assurance that the Indian estates are properly protected against waste or dissipation because of the conservators' and trustees' fidelity bonds ignores the fact that such waste or dissipation must be detected and proved before collections can be made upon the fidelity bonds. Consequently, the existence of fidelity bonds provides no assurance against waste or dissipation. They merely provide a source of funds to furnish compensation when waste and dissipation are proved.

For the reasons stated above it is suggested that it would be prudent for the Department to reconsider the limitations placed upon its current investigation and undertake to look into all of the matters raised in the July 5th letter.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM L. DAWSON,
Chairman.

SEPTEMBER 11, 1962.

Hon. WILLIAM L. DAWSON,
Chairman, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. DAWSON: Thank you for your letter of August 22, 1962, again referring to the lands of the Agua Caliente Band of Mission Indians at Palm Springs, California.