

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
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INDIAN COMMISSIONER BENNETT AND U.S. INDIANS TO ATTEND INTERAMERICAN INDIAN CONGRESS

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett will be the United States delegate to the Sixth Interamerican Indian Congress in Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico, April 15 through 21, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Commissioner Bennett will be accompanied by Indian leaders and other advisers.

The Congress meets quadrennially under provisions of a treaty to which most Latin American countries are signatories, for the purpose of exchanging information, views and experiences.

Four Indian tribal leaders will be in the delegation: Wendell Chino, President of the National Congress of American Indians and President of the Mescalero Apache Tribal Council, Mescalero, N. M.; Cato Valandra, Chairman of the Rosebud Tribal Council, St. Francis, S. D.; Roger Jourdain, Chairman of the Red Lake Tribal Council, Red Lake, Minn.; and Vernon Jackson, general manager, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Warm Springs, Ore.

Another adviser will be Mrs. LaDonna Harris, a Comanche active in Indian affairs and wife of Senator Fred R. Harris of Oklahoma.

Arrow, Inc., an Indian betterment organization, and the Association on American Indian Affairs are participating in financing the attendance of the individual Indian advisers.

The United States delegation is to meet in Mexico City on April 14.

Sessions of the Congress will be held at Patzcuaro beginning Monday morning, April 15, and will continue through Sunday, April 21.

Commissioner Bennett will report at the opening session on developments in Indian affairs in the United States since the Fifth Interamerican Indian Congress was held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 1964. He is a member of the Oneida Indian tribe of Wisconsin and is the first Indian to serve as United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs since 1871 and the second Indian ever to hold the position. He took office April 27, 1966.

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