

Tribal Leaders Call for Direct Control by

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 21—Indian tribal chiefs called today for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be removed from the Department of the Interior and placed in "receivership" in the White House to enable Indians to gain justice and protection of their land and resources.

The chiefs contended that efforts at "reform" within the bureau to give Indians more voice in their affairs were being "subverted" by old-line bureaucrats and others in the department and by some members of Congress.

They arrived in Washington for a series of conferences at the Interior Department and the White House, hoping to lay their case before President Nixon.

Peter McDonald, chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council, speaking as chairman of the National Tribal Chairman's Association, said that only by placing the Indian Bureau in the White House could the Administration halt the "bureaucratic subversion" of President Nixon's policy of greater self-determination for Indians.

He was joined by other In-

dian leaders in a news conference on Capitol Hill sponsored by representative Sam Steiger, Republican of Arizona. Mr. Steiger charged that the appointments made to the bureau and the shift of Indian activists who sought reforms had created a "super B.I.A." to take control of Indian affairs and destroy the policies of the Indian Commissioner, Louis R. Bruce. Mr. McDonald described President Nixon's Indian policy laid down in July, 1970, as a "historic and courageous policy." But, he said, forces within the Interior Department are

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converging "to destroy any effort at the kind of sweeping reform at which the President aimed."

"It is deplorable that the fate of a whole race of people should be subject to political moves," he said.

The board of directors of the Tribal Chairman's Association recently adopted a resolution calling for the transfer of the Indian Bureau to the White House. It is being circulated to 67 tribal chairmen covering about two-thirds of American Indians. Mr. McDonald said

that the initial responses were favorable.

Mr. McDonald and other Indian leaders pointed particularly to the installation of John O. Crow as Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Miss Wilma Victor as Assistant Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton as indicative of efforts to blunt reforms.

The appointment of Mr. Crow, a career employe, has angered young, activist Indians within the bureau who were brought in by Commissioner

Bruce. They also protested the transfer of William H. Veeder, an authority on Indian water and land rights, to Phoenix.

Mr. Veeder's transfer has been held up pending a review of his case after he rejected the transfer and charged that current policies were designed to destroy Indians economically.