

Battle With Cops

Melee at the Indian Bureau

Washington

Indian militants fought with police in the lobby of the Bureau of Indian Affairs yesterday as they tried to make a citizen's arrest of the agency's second-highest man who they claim is stifling reforms.

While negotiations were under way to bring militants together with the Indian Bureau's hierarchy, police continued to isolate the protesters in a hallway at the bottom of the first-floor stairs. This apparently contributed largely to the melee.

Ted Means, an Oglala Sioux and brother of the man leading the demonstration, was thrown off the stairs by police as he attempted to go up toward the office of John O. Crow, deputy commissioner of bureau. Crow is a Cherokee Indian.

SCUFFLE

When he landed in the lobby with three or four building guards on top of him several Indians lunged at the police and the fight was on.

The screaming, shouting, kicking and cursing continued for the next 15 minutes.

Twenty-one Indians, mostly from the American Indian Movement and the National Indian Youth Council, were arrested and charged by the Interior Department with illegal entry. But Bureau Commissioner Louis R. Bruce asked Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton to drop the charges.

About six hours after the arrests, the Interior Department agreed to drop its complaint and the Indians were released.

It was the second protest against Crow in two days.

Tuesday, Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald told a news conference that Crow is a tool of the anti-Indian elements within Interior and is cutting short reforms Bruce had initiated. Most of the reforms were endorsed by President Nixon himself in a speech a year ago.

CHARGE

Russell Means, leader of the AIM demonstrators, said yesterday's protest was against Crow "because he has committed crimes against the Indian people."

Young Indians, especially, have been making their anger known around the country in the past two years — from occupation of Alcatraz and Mount Rushmore to the painting red of a New York City statue of President Theodore Roosevelt.

But yesterday's fracas was the first to hit the BIA headquarters.

Ernest Stevens, one of the Indians brought into the BIA by Bruce, said what is surfacing is a "national Indian uprising. This is about the angriest Indians have ever been — but they are only beginning to get angry."

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