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LEADERS RESTORED IN INDIAN BUREAU

Morton Amends Order That
Diluted Bruce's Power

By WILLIAM M. BLAIR
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17 —

The Department of the Interior disclosed today that Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton had restored full power to the chief of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Mr. Morton amended his original order, which had diluted the power of the Indian Commissioner, Louis R. Bruce, and had placed more authority in the hands of the new deputy commissioner, John O. Crow.

Mr. Bruce and Mr. Crow agreed today at a news conference on Indian problems that Mr. Bruce was "still making all major policy decisions."

They sought to allay fears voiced publicly by young activists and reform-minded Indians in the bureau that the agency was being returned to "old-line bureaucrats" and was negating efforts to gain for Indians a larger voice in their own affairs.

Mr. Bruce denied that an effort was being made to silence the young Indians by the appointment of Mr. Crow and a realignment of agency personnel.

Changes Are Sought

Mr. Crow, he said, met with activists and told them "we do need their support and their ideas all the way down the line."

"There is no question how I feel," Mr. Bruce said. "I'm trying to make some changes to help Indians. They want to be heard. They want more influence more Indians in the bureau. I think we're filling those needs."

Of 100 top jobs in the bureau, 50 are held by Indians covering policy-making areas, Mr. Crow estimated. At the same time, he said that there was some difficulty in getting Indians who could meet civil service regulations for major posts. "We've had to rule out some," he said.

In his order of July 23 set-

ting forth the authority of Mr. Crow as Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Morton conferred on him all the power held by the Commissioner. In addition, he granted Mr. Crow the sole power to redelegate authority, including that reserved for Mr. Bruce.

In an amendment, dated Aug. 6, Mr. Morton limited Mr. Crow's power to make appointments by specifying that he could only make recommendations. In addition, he said the Commissioner again had the power to redelegate authority.

'Typographical Error'

However, as late as last Sunday, department officials said that original order contained a "typographical error" and would be corrected. This was after the reduction in Mr. Bruce's power had become public. Mr. Morton also told a reporter Saturday that a "typographical error" in his order would be corrected.

Mr. Morton is on a month-long tour of department projects in the West.

Mr. Crow confirmed that economic development contracts with Indian tribes were under the scrutiny of bureau auditors and the General Accounting office.

Some of these contracts, designed to enable Indian tribes to manage their own affairs, from real estate to schools, were promoted by activist Indians. The review stemmed from complaints by members of Congress that recent contracts had been loosely drawn and may violated Federal procurement laws.

"We have to define what we're trying to obtain by these contracts," Mr. Crow said.

There is no intention of dismissing William H. Veeder, a 60-year-old Indian water rights expert, because he refused a transfer to Arizona, Mr. Crow said.

"We'll have to talk to him some more," he said in reply to questions about having engineered his transfer in an effort to silence Mr. Veeder's charge that the Indians were being destroyed through failure of the Government to protect Indian land and water rights.