

INDIANS IN CLASH WITH U.S. GUARDS

24 Arrested, Then Set Free,
in Protest on Rights

By WILLIAM M. BLAIR

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22 —

A band of militant young Indians sought to make a citizens' arrest of Federal official today and wound up in a noisy clash with Government guards at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Twenty-four Indians, including eight women, were arrested by the District of Columbia police on charges of unlawful entry as they sought a conference with bureau officials on their contention that Indians were being denied basic rights.

The charges filed by the Department of the Interior were dropped tonight at the request of the department and the militants were released. A meeting with Indian Commissioner Louis R. Bruce was then scheduled.

The major target of the militants was John O. Crow, Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs, whose appointment has drawn protests from activists within the bureau and from tribal council chiefs drowned the country.

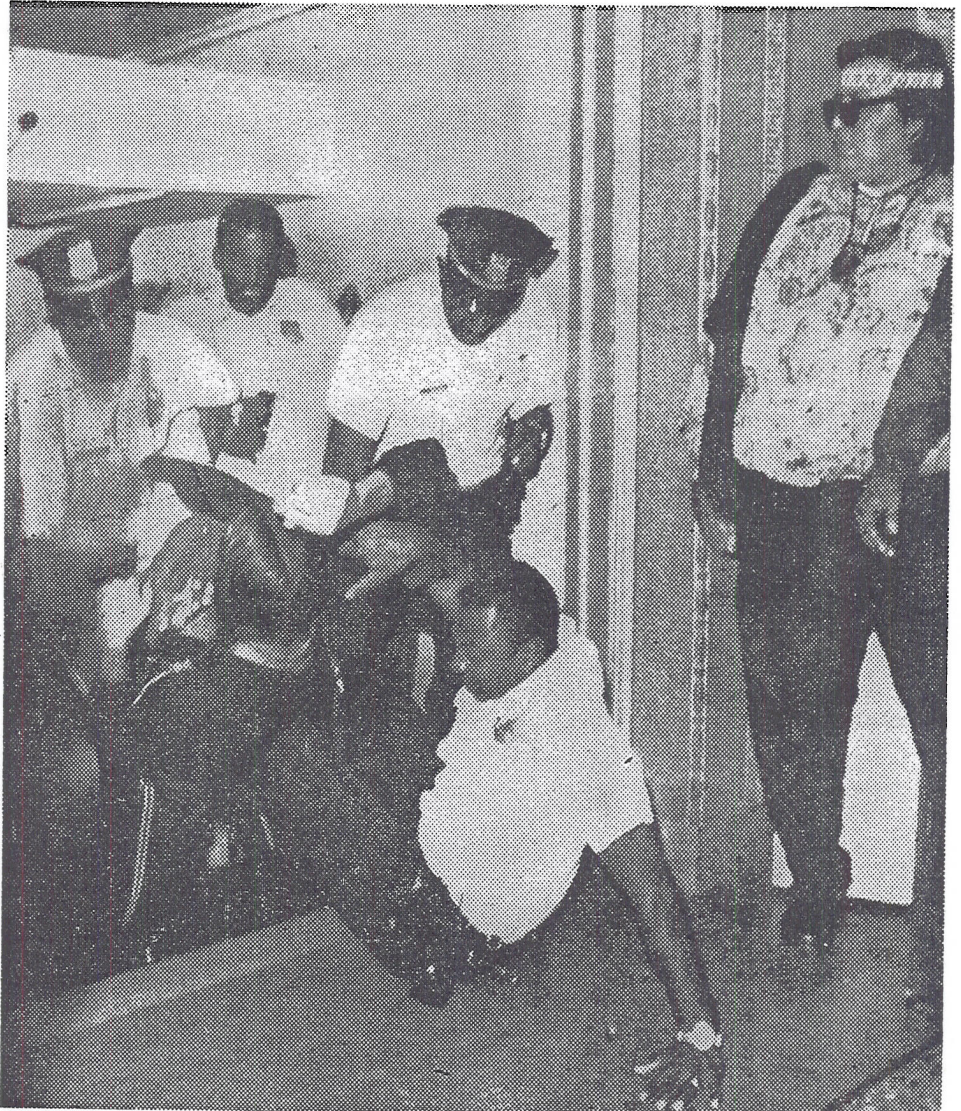
The clash took place as representatives of the moderate National Tribal Chairmen's Association met with various Government officials about problem with the bureau. These included allegations that reforms to give Indians more voice in their own affairs were being stifled by Mr. Crow and old-line bureaucrats.

Seek Talks With Nixon

Indians leaders have also sought conferences with President Nixon to put before him their contention that his policy of greater self-determination for Indians is being subverted by the bureaucracy. The tribal chairmen have called for removing the bureau from the Department of the Interior and making it an independent agency under the White House.

This proposal was initiated by Peter McDonald, chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council and head of the chairmen's association. Mr. McDonald conferred today with Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton after the clash at the Indian Bureau.

The invasion of the bureau was directed by the American Indian Movement and the National Indian Youth Council. In a letter to Mr. Nixon, the two militant groups accused Mr. Crow of "gross misconduct and criminal injustice against the native American people."



United Press International

Policemen ejecting an Indian from Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington yesterday

Dispute Over Contracts

They said that avenues of discussion and negotiation were "now closed by political maneuvering within the Interior Department." They further contended that Mr. Crow's decisions were jeopardizing the existence of Indians "through his dismantling of a unique— and Indian—economic development group committed to the creation of Indian opportunity on Indian land."

"Most tragically," the letter said, "Mr. Crow has in his brief tenure suspended the granting of contracts by which Indian people might administer those public institutions such as schools and other vital areas which touch on the very center of their tribal and communal life."

The reference was to contracts through which the bureau turns Federal programs over to Indians and expands aid to urban Indians. New contracts have been held up pending a review of procedures after some members of Congress questioned contracts that were drawn up by young activist Indians brought in to the bureau by Commissioner Bruce.

The militant Indians also

protested the "subordination and demotion" of aides to Mr. Bruce. These actions were "executed without the consent of the native leadership," they said.

The letter to Mr. Nixon concluded:

"The American Indian movement and the National Indian Youth Council hereby arrest the new Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, John O. Crow, because of the crimes he has committed against the Native Americans of this continent, ancestrally theirs."

A group of from 30 to 40 militants gathered outside the Indian Bureau Building this morning but were blocked by guards of the General Services Administration. The guard force was enlarged in

recent days because of word that the militants would appear.

Some of the Indians managed to elude the guards and slipped into the building through a stairway to the auditorium.

Some of the group barricaded themselves in two rooms of the public information office on the first floor and others occupied Mr. Crow's office on the second floor.

They demanded a meeting with Commissioner Bruce and some of his young aides. Assured of the meeting by the aides, the militants emerged and a melee ensued as the guards moved in, on orders from Interior Department officials.

Some of the militants resisted and were forcibly removed by the guards amid shouting and war-whopping.

Some were wrestled to the landing on a stairway leading to the second floor.

Those arrested were taken to jail in District of Columbia police vans.