

WXPost FEB 28 1975

N.M. Indians Reject Aid of Ehrlichman

United Press International

The eight Pueblo Indian tribes in New Mexico that Watergate conspirator John D. Ehrlichman hoped to assist as "personal penance" have decided not to accept his help, it was disclosed yesterday.

Ehrlichman's lawyer, Ira Lowe, said Pueblo Chief Herman Agogyo of the San Juan tribe telephoned Ehrlichman Wednesday night to withdraw the Indians' invitation. The decision was made, Lower said, because of the "great publicity" surrounding Ehrlichman's offer of legal assistance to the tribes.

Ehrlichman last week asked U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica to send him to the remote Pueblo reservation in New Mexico, rather than prison, for his Watergate offenses. Sirica refused and instead sentenced Ehrlichman to a prison term of from 2½ to 8 years.

Ehrlichman then said he would help the Indians anyway, taking up residence on the reservation and providing help with land use disputes, his legal speciality, while he appealed the Watergate conviction.

Lowe said Ehrlichman told the Indians in a letter yesterday:

"I am grateful for your kindness to me during the past weeks. Of course, I was sorry that the governors have withdrawn their prior invitation due to the subsequent, inordinate press attention and publicity.

"I understand their present reluctance and will begin again looking for the right place to contribute to the well-being of others."

"What we're going to do now," Lower said, "is find another public service thing to do and we just won't announce it until after he's started it."

By doing "personal penance" with a public service project, Lowe said, Ehrlichman hopes to bring the alternative sentence concept "to the attention of other lawyers who want to do the same thing for their clients."