ities in the area of solid, basic high school education and greater opportunities in higher education.

In 1968, the BIA listed 14,500 employees and it may be higher than that today. Nevertheless, considering there are some 600,000 Indians in the country, a ratio of one employee for every 41 Indians is an excellent one. Unfortunately, all that labor results in very little benefit for the Indian individual. Thus, NCAI leaders find it hard to blame the youth for their attitudes.

Indians feel that everything they have ever revered and protected has fallen prey to the growing white population. Now, it's water and the abundant life it holds. Though the Indian was hoodwinked out of his land and his buffalo, he's not about to be deprived of his water rights or his fishing rights.

The danger of losing water rights faces many Indians in this age of high water usage. Any contest, whatever generated by a state, the federal government or the Indians themselves, will affect all Indian tribes that depend heavily upon their right to utilize their water resources.

One of the nation’s leading experts in Indian water rights, Bill Veeder, an attorney in the BIA, was at the convention. Although his knowledge in this delicate area probably surpasses that of any other expert, Veeder, by federal law, is not permitted to act as counsel or co-counsel on behalf of Indians where the U.S. Government may be a party on the other side of the issue. Major legislation will be introduced in the next Congress to correct this law.

Many dozen water-rights cases exist, but two important examples are Pyramid Lake, Nev., and fishing rights in Washington State.

Pyramid Lake was "drained" by deprivation (dewatering of flood stream) so that a desert community of whites could be built on its diverted waters. The Paiute Indians who once lived in natural harmony with the environment, now watch their lake drop a foot and a half each year—down a total of 80 feet since the Bureau of Reclamation built a dam across the Truckee River.

The Paiute have taken their case to the U.S. Congress only to be outmaneuvered by politics. They have pleaded with the Department of the Interior for the Bureau of Reclamation (under the Department of Interior) to release more water to Pyramid Lake, only to have Interior Secretary Hickel make deals with the governors of California and Nevada that the lake be permitted to drop to its "balance" point. The Paiute, having already taken legal action against the Department of the Interior in a late-hour effort to save the lake.

It was clearly evident at the convention that Indians must maintain even fiercer vigilance over their rights, because water losses today are very expensive: the Indians have very little left.

Another case that carries the interest of Indians nationally is the struggle of Washington State Indians in maintaining federal treaty fishing rights against the interference of a third party—the State of Washington. The Indians, primarily the Muckleshoot, Puyallup and Nisqually who endeavor to squeeze a living off their little resources, depend upon the taking of fish for their needs. The state, in protection of its commercial but primarily sports fishermen, insists upon controlling Indian fishing in the rivers and streams. The Indians, to demonstrate their unwillingness to be subjected again to "broken treaties," have conducted "fish-ins," which have resulted in gunfire exchange with state police and the manhandling of Indians by troopers enforcing state law.

The Department of the Interior has stood on behalf of the Indians. But Indians do not consider Interior intervention always the best course of action. They say that history bears it out, that Interior has often covered its real motives by its overt generous acts. The department went to bat for Pyramid Lake once upon a time, got some laws on the books but made no move to secure water for Pyramid Lake.

The question is: Older as to why a national convention of Indians should be held in such an ungodly place as Alaska. The reasons expressed by chiefs throughout the country have great merit, for the settlement provisions passed by the U.S. Senate in July, 1970, for the Alaskan Indians go far beyond anything of Indian claims in history.

If the Senate bill should complete passage in the Congress in its present form, it would set precedents American Indians consider too dangerous to overlook. The Indians went to Alaska to see for themselves what the natives were giving up and to warn the Alaska natives of the dangers of insufficient foresight in dealing with Congress.

Black politics in the election

The Nov. 3 elections boosted the black officeholders in the South to well over the 600 mark, as compared with fewer than 80 when the Voting Rights Act went into effect in 1965. However, the level of importance of office won by blacks in the region was not elevated. Marvin Wall, research director for the Voter Education Project in Atlanta, reports that the highest level in terms of power and authority for elected blacks remains as that of state legislators, sheriffs and local judges. The black voters' role Southwide is analyzed by Wall in a special report in this issue. RRIC staff writer Bernard Garnett reports how black candidates fared in Alabama, where the predominantly black National Democratic Party of Alabama fielded 162 candidates and the state elected its first two black legislators since Reconstruction.

ESAP funding criticized

The Emergency School Assistance Program (ESAP), a new effort of the Nixon administration to support desegregating school districts, is something less than a smashing success so far. The $75-million first installment on what is promised as a multi-billion-dollar program has attracted heavy competition in the bidding. Its handling by administration officials under Vice President Agnew's direction has been roundly criticized.

For example, Fulton County (Ga.) Deputty Supt. Douglas McAue said the application procedure has been "handled in a fashion so grotesque and mysterious that it seemed like something straight out of Edgar Allan Poe." McAue said his encounter with government representatives made him feel like he was "in a loan shark office."

A detailed critique of the ESAP operation will soon be released by a coalition of civil rights organizations making a study of school desegregation (Race Relations Reporter, No. 19: Nov. 2). The coalition's assessment of ESAP—first installment in a more comprehensive study—is expected to be highly critical of the administration's handling of the program.

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