



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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Surname:

Tribal Programs
4952-59

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- Hopi*

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INDIAN
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Appd. Sol. Off.
<i>Shannon</i>

Dear Mr. Johnson:

DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR
MAY 1 1959
RECEIVED

Reference is made to your recent letter requesting an interview regarding revision of the Constitution of the Hopi Tribe of Arizona. The Hopi Tribal Council has recognized the need of such revision and has requested the various villages to discuss this matter, but only the village of Moencopi has thus far reported its views.

FROM SOLICITOR
MAY 1 1959
BY SIGNATURE

You are, of course, aware of the pending litigation between the Navajos and Hopis over the territorial limits of the Hopi Reservation under the 1882 Executive Order. While the Commissioner of Indian Affairs has felt that the tribal council should not await final determination of this suit in view of the benefits that could be derived from committee work on modifications of the constitution, the general feeling among tribal leaders appears to be otherwise. They feel that discussion of constitutional questions at this time might cause some dissension among the Hopis which would be exploited by the Navajos to the detriment of the Hopis in the territorial dispute. As a consequence, it is not likely that such questions can profitably be discussed in the immediate future.

Under Article I of the Hopi Constitution, the Secretary is directed to call a referendum vote on proposed amendments if the council makes a proper request therefor. The traditional villages of Shungopovi and Shungopovi, whose chiefs you state you represent and who you assert desire constitutional revision, have as yet afforded no specific amendments indicating how they wish the tribe to be reorganized. According to our information, there even appears to be some differences of opinion in these villages and this does not appear well for progress in this direction. However, since any council representative may propose an amendment to the constitution, there would seem to be no objection to any representative endeavoring to work out amendments which might prove satisfactory to the council.

FRS 9743

In view of the above, while we do not think that any conference in Washington would achieve any worthwhile results at this time, you are welcome to discuss any problems you may have with officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs who are in charge of these matters.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Roger Ernst

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

Mr. Caleb Johnson
420 Brown Hall
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey

Copy to: Area Director, Phoenix
Supt., Hopi Agency
DCCO
Secretary's Reading File
SOL
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