

## G L O S S A R Y

*BIA Superintendent:* This is the official federal position for the person in charge of U.S. government business on all Indian reservations. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this person was called the Indian Agent. It is an appointed position within the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

*Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):* The BIA is an agency of the U.S. housed within the Department of Indian Affairs. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was called the Office of Indian Affairs and was first a part of the War Department (now known as the Department of Defense). The BIA is headed by the Commissioner, who is appointed to the position. It is the agency that directly oversees federal business on all federally-recognized Indian reservations. Its representative on individual reservations is the BIA Superintendent.

*Business Council:* The Business Council are elected officers of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes. The Business Council members earn a salary, conduct the day-to-day business of the tribes, serve fixed-length terms, and have oversight of tribal business (including the various departments such as welfare, health care, housing, business permitting, fish and game licenses, police, etc.). The General Council of each tribe elects the Business Council members.

*Dawes Act:* In 1887, the US Congress passed the General Allotment Act, often referred to as the Dawes Act for its chief sponsor, Senator Henry Dawes (1816-1903) of Massachusetts. The Act's purpose was to require Indian heads of household to take up individual land allotments on their respective reservations. Government officials hoped this would encourage individual family-based economic independence and break up more communally-based tribal relationships. It was an unmitigated disaster for Indian peoples. More than half of all Indian reservation lands eventually were sold to non-tribal persons, depriving Indians of much of their land-based resources.

*Detribalization:* During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, concerned individuals and legislators fixated on the belief that Indians had to assimilate narrowly defined American ideals of individual self-sufficiency in order to survive in the modern world. To that end, laws passed from the 1880s through the early 1900s banned the tribal chief-and-council systems, outlawed many native dances and ceremonies, prohibited traditional crafts like beadwork, punished children for

speaking native languages in schools, and generally discouraged collective decision-making.

*General Council:* Sovereignty for both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapahos lies in their respective General Council. This body is made up of all enrolled tribal members 18 years of age or older. The General Council meets annually to elect Business Council members and often meets quarterly to discuss matters of importance to each tribe. This includes revising or creating the laws by which they govern themselves. The General Council is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century phenomenon, but is patterned after 19<sup>th</sup>-century traditions of collective decision-making.

*Indian Reorganization Act:* In 1928, the Merriam Commission strongly criticized the attempts at assimilation and detribalization as failed policies. This resulted in an “about-face” in federal/Indian relations. Under the guidance of John Collier, who served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933-1945, Congress passed the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934. Also known as the Indian Reorganization Act, the new federal policy abolished the allotment goals, abandoned detribalization and assimilation, and attempted to restore Indian control and self-governance over their reservation lands. It also encouraged the preservation of Indian languages, customs, and traditions. Tribes had to vote to accept or reject these reforms within one year. Both Wind River tribes rejected the Act (altogether, 78 tribes rejected and 174 accepted), preferring to set up their own governments rather than use the model required in the Act itself. Notably, the Act did not restore to tribes the lands already allotted and individually owned, but did place all unallotted reservation lands in trust, to be administered by the Department of the Interior.

*Irrigation Projects in Fremont County:* Eastern Shoshones and Northern Arapahos constructed the first irrigation ditches on the reservation in the 1890s to bring water to some of the early allotments. But the federal government never fully funded the number of projects that were needed to really turn reservation lands into farmland. In 1906, lands ceded by the Indians the previous year (McLaughlin Agreement) were opened to white settlement. The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad planned a spur line from Casper to Lander to take advantage of the expected population growth. Shoshoni (1905) and Hudson and Riverton (1906) quickly sprang up along the proposed route. The Chicago salt magnate, Joy Morton, planned to irrigate lands in the railroad’s area through a company named the Wyoming Central Irrigation Company. This encouraged homesteaders to claim land in the ceded portions, but few ditches had been constructed by 1915 and many

homesteaders left. Without water, the lands could not be farmed successfully. Eventually, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation became involved in the 1910s, built the Wind River Diversion Dam in 1921-1923, and delivered the first irrigation water in 1925.

*McLaughlin Agreement of 1905:* James McLaughlin (1842-1923) worked as a reservation Indian agent in the 1870s and 1880s, then was promoted to the position of Inspector in 1895. In 1896, he was the lead negotiator when the Wind River tribes ceded the hot springs in the northeastern corner of the reservation. When allotment of reservation lands took full effect in the early 1900s, he became the lead negotiator for the government to acquire land cessions from several tribes of unallotted land. He returned to Wind River for a cession negotiation in April, 1904. This cession resulted in the loss of nearly two-thirds of reservation lands. The Agreement was ratified and enabled by Congress in an act passed in March 1905, opening the way for homesteaders to acquire former reservation lands.