

NOTES TO THE NATION SEPTEMBER 2, 2008

FIRST DAY OF THE TZI ZHO SESSION TODAY 10:00 AM

Today for the first time since our first session two years ago, we started the session with a cedar ceremony in front of the Administration Building. The color guard, Kenny Perry, Hollis Stabler and John Williams, Jr., from Post 198 brought in the colors. Vann Big Horse, Kenny Bob Big Horse, John Star Big Horse and K. C. Bills from the Pawhuska village brought over a drum and sang a flag song and a prayer song. Cameron Pratt took care of the cedar and fanned off elected officials and staff before convening the meeting. He went in the building and smoked the congressional offices. It was a good way to start the session.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE DELIVERED BY THE CHIEF

The Chief spoke and started with a comment about the 14th Special Session which failed to convene due to a lack of a quorum. He later called this a “non-special session.” He mentioned twice in the first paragraph the differences that exist between his office and some members of Congress.

He asked Congress to consider unanimously passing ONCA 08-33, the Osage Nation Ethics bill in this session. This is a bill he vetoed in the last regular session.

The Chief said he was disappointed to hear that the Appropriations Committee of Congress had recommended that Executive and Judicial Branch employees not receive a step increase and instead would receive a flat increase of \$900.00 annually. He said that a quick calculation showed that 42% of the employees would receive less of an increase than they would have if they got the step increase. He ignored the fact that 58% of the employees will receive more than they would with a step increase and those will be the ones that we felt needed it the most.

He was disappointed in the next paragraph too, mostly with the Appropriations Committee.

In conclusion, he appealed to the Congress to pass a Merit Based Employment System and an Election Code. He also wanted us to put proper procedures and rules in place prior to conducting an investigation or holding a hearing. I guess he meant if the Congress holds a hearing—it didn't seem to be important a couple of weeks ago.

When he finished speaking, there was an awkward silence. Even though there were a number of people there from the Executive Branch, Congress and Congressional staff and members of the public, there was no applause or any kind of acknowledgement.

SPEAKER MASON GIVES WELCOMING ADDRESS

Speaker Mason welcomed Congress to the Tzi-Zho Session. He gave a brief overview of our first two years of the 1st Congress. Excerpts follow:

“Let no man or woman stand in our way of our dedication and execution of our duties to the people. We have authority granted to us and I feel, you share with me, the need to accomplish these obligations.”

“ Our ability to assist in our nation's growth and advancement is dependent on a deliberate and timely communication effort from the Executive Branch. However, we are advancing this government—most recently under fire—none the less we are moving forward with new legislative attitudes and new professional enlightenments. To quote one of our distinguished colleagues, ‘We are becoming as strong and steadfast as the mighty oak.’ ”

“Transparency is near.”

“Change is coming. Transparency is near. We shall take care of our own house.”

“Transparency is near.”

“I pray for the *good use* and not *abuse* of our nation’s wealth. I pray for forgiveness of our shortcomings and for strength, energy and stamina as we move this Congress and Nation into the future. May God’s blessing be upon us and upon the people of this great Osage Nation.”

The house applauded the Speaker and then we went right into the business of the day.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS LAST ALL DAY

Most of us were in committee meetings all day dealing with appropriations. My last meeting (Appropriations Committee) ended at 5:30 PM. Some of our staff, Barbara Rice and Alexis Rencountre for sure, will be working late tonight to get ready for tomorrow’s session.