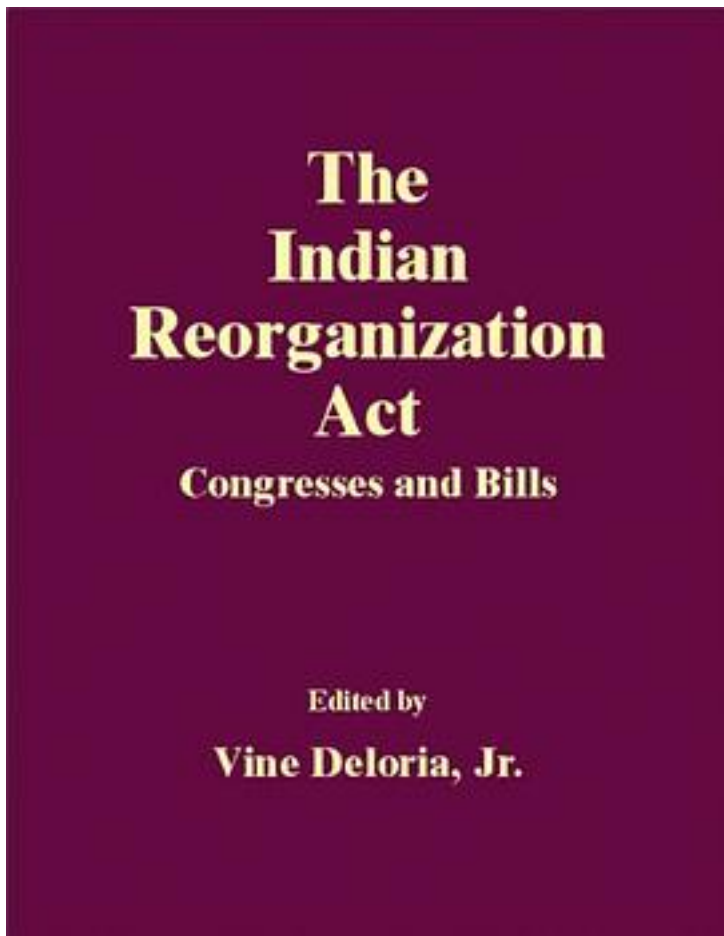


The Indian Reorganization Act



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出版者:Univ of Oklahoma Pr

出版时间:2002-7

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780806133980

In 1934, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier began a series of "congresses" with American Indians to discuss his proposed federal bill for granting self-government to tribal reservations. For the first time, Indians were asked for input in the structuring of

their relations with federal and state government and law. In The Indian Reorganization Act, Vine Deloria, Jr., has compiled the actual historical records of those congresses. Collier envisioned a time when American Indian tribes would have their own governmental institutions to replace the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He believed consolidation of individual and communal land under a tribal government was the means by which to achieve this independence. Time and again, Collier was puzzled by the lack of American Indian support for the Indian Reorganization Act. For example, his plans for consolidation offended tribes who had come to value personal ownership of land, and Collier even found himself accused of communism by angered Indians. Through this book, Deloria makes available important documents of the premier years of reform in federal Indian policy as well as the bill itself. A version of Collier's act eventually passed Congress, but in a less far-reaching form. Nevertheless, a new concept of self-government had emerged, one that now defines the federal government's approach to American Indian policy and that has changed forever the way American Indians define themselves.

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