

Although Collier was aware from Duffy of high-level congressional interest in the Hudson application, Collier said he never perceived the application as a particularly important issue for him or the Secretary. Collier expressed complete confidence in Duffy's ability to handle the matter without his help.³⁵⁰ Duffy also downplayed the degree of controversy or congressional pressure surrounding the Hudson application, describing it as being only one of many important issues. He had no explanation for why Collier attended the meeting with him.³⁵¹

2. The Four Feathers Partnership Enlists Lobbyists

Concerned that the applicants were not gaining sufficient access to the top decision-makers at Interior, on March 31, 1995, Mark Goff – a public relations consultant retained by Havenick – contacted Paul Eckstein of the law firm of Brown & Bain on behalf of the venture

³⁴⁹(...continued)

Oberstar met with George Skibine . . . and Tom Callier [sic] . . . on May 2 to give their final push for the MN tribes. The Dept. indicated that they have a lot of information and to be honest are not looking forward to the political ramifications of this decision and therefore may put this off for months. I will follow up with George Skibine on a regular basis to check the status of the case.

Both Collier and Duffy deny having made such a statement and further deny having delayed the final decision for such a reason. Christensen's memo also bears several handwritten notations she made, including the following notations that she cannot now explain: "Harold Ickes [sic], Jr."; "Leon Panetta"; "Babbit's [sic] said it was done deal."

³⁵⁰Collier described Duffy as one of the few DOI employees in whom he had complete confidence to handle congressional meetings like this. He also said he would not accompany Duffy unless the congressman was really angry or Duffy was tired of dealing with him. Collier did not recall attending the meeting or why he went with Duffy, but stated he only attended meetings on Capitol Hill if he was directly involved in the issue or the DOI staff member working on the issue was being "beat up." OIC Collier Int. at 18.

³⁵¹Circumstances suggest that Collier's decision to attend may have related to controversy then surrounding DOI land in trust decisions in the wake of DOI's May 1, 1995, announcement of its approval of the Pequot tribe's application to enlarge its land holdings adjacent to its casino.