

**TWENTY-SEVENTH
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
BOARD OF INDIAN
COMMISSIONERS; 1895**

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VARIOUS

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Franklin J. C.

Dec. 17, 1943

R E P O R T
OF THE
BOARD OF INDIAN COMMISSIONERS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 15, 1896.*

SIR: We have the honor to submit the twenty-seventh annual report of the Board of Indian Commissioners.

Since our last report the vacancies caused by the lamented death of Hon. Elbert B. Monroe and Hon. Charles C. Painter have been filled by the appointment of Bishop H. B. Whipple, of Minnesota, and Mr. Francis E. Leupp, of this city.

PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES.

We have discharged the duties required by law relating to the purchase of Indian supplies, assisting the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs in opening bids, inspecting samples, and awarding contracts in Chicago from April 30 to May 14; in New York, from May 21 to June 6, and again in Chicago, at a special letting, from October 29 to 31. From such oversight as we have been able to give to subsequent deliveries of goods, we are confident that in the main contractors have dealt honorably, furnishing supplies equal in quality to the samples selected. In a few cases it has been necessary to reject deliveries of flour and shoes. We are glad to testify to the vigilance of the inspectors employed in this service.

FIELD WORK.

After the award of contracts in Chicago was completed, our secretary visited the La Pointe Agency, in Wisconsin, where he found Lieut. W. A. Mercer, U. S. A., an earnest and efficient Indian agent. His scheme for utilizing the lumber by erecting mills on the reservations and employing Indians as lumbermen and mill hands is a practical success, and worthy of imitation at other agencies where large lumber interests are found. It is much more profitable than the usual method of selling the stumpage, and it promotes self-supporting industry, the building of comfortable houses, and many improvements. We would be glad to see the White Earth agent instructed to adopt the same method upon the great lumber tracts in Minnesota.

In April last Commissioner Smiley visited the Pyramid Lake and Walker River reservations, in Nevada, for the purpose of investigating the wisdom of a measure proposed in Congress touching the interests of the Indians owning those reservations. The investigation was authorized by the Interior Department upon the suggestion of members of this Board that the bill proposed, if enacted, might greatly wrong the

Indians and cause to the Government trouble and large expense. We invite special attention to the report of Commissioner Smiley, and trust that his conclusions may have due consideration should the bill or any similar measure again be proposed in Congress. We have surely seen enough of the disastrous results of removing Indians from their reservations, and of attempting to consolidate unfriendly tribes, and we hope that such experiments may not be repeated.

CONFERENCES.

The usual public conferences with representatives of religious societies and other friends of Indian civilization have been held at Mohonk Lake and in this city. The attendance has been larger than in former years, and the earnest discussions of topics and policies, both old and new, clearly show that interest in the welfare of the Indian has steadily grown. Much has been done by these conferences to mold public opinion, to further wise legislation, and to promote reform in the administration of Indian affairs. The meetings of the secretaries of missionary societies with their friends and supporters for reporting progress, mutual counsel, and incitement to new effort have been full of helpful and hopeful interest. Much has been done by the churches through their mission boards to instruct the Indians, to reclaim them from barbarism, and lift them to a better life. Still much remains to be done, and we earnestly hope that such Christian effort may not be relaxed, but increased. The organization of Young Men's Christian Societies by Dr. Eastman, and of Young People's Christian Endeavor Societies, is a promising movement. These societies will help the young to resist the evils and temptations that come in with civilization. Law and secular education alone will not save the Indian. He must have moral and Christian training to give him the vital force to counteract the enticements that tend to degenerate and degrade him.

EDUCATION.

The appropriations by Congress for Indian schools for the current year are about 2 per cent less than for the previous year. Still, by rigid economy, the schools have been maintained, and some progress has been made both in enrollment and average attendance, as shown in the following table:

Enrollment and average attendance at Indian schools, 1894 and 1895.

Kind of school.	Enrollment.		Average attendance.	
	1894.	1895.	1894.	1895.
Government schools:				
Nonreservation training.....	4,350	4,673	3,609	3,799
Reservation boarding.....	7,631	8,068	6,140	6,477
Day.....	6,256	8,843	2,082	2,528
Total.....	18,237	21,584	11,831	12,804
Contract schools:				
Boarding.....	4,147	3,873	3,543	3,406
Day.....	596	668	428	407
Boarding, specially appropriated for.....	1,281	1,919	1,152	1,185
Total.....	6,024	6,460	5,123	4,998
Public day schools.....	204	219	102	122
Mission schools not assisted by the Government; boarding.....	132	253	124	194
Aggregate.....	21,619	23,036	17,320	18,188
Increase.....		1,417		968

It appears from these figures, which do not include the New York Indians and the Five Civilized Tribes, that there has been a gain during the last year of 1,417 in enrollment and 968 in average attendance, and that 23,036 Indian pupils, over 60 per cent of the school population, are gathered for daily instruction and are being trained in the habits and customs of civilized life. In the contract schools there has been a decrease of 146 in enrollment and 155 in average attendance. This has resulted from the reduction of 20 per cent required by law in the grant of funds for schools of this character. Four of these schools have been converted into Government boarding schools, the buildings and equipment having been purchased or rented from the owners. One, the White's Manual Labor Institute of Wabash, Ind., has, much to our regret, been closed. The following table exhibits the amounts allowed for contract schools for the current and several former years:

Amounts set apart for education of Indians in schools under private control for the fiscal years 1889 to 1896, inclusive.

	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.
Roman Catholic	\$347, 072	\$356, 257	\$393, 349	\$394, 756	\$375, 645	\$389, 745	\$366, 215	\$368, 471
Presbyterian	41, 825	47, 060	44, 950	44, 510	50, 090	56, 340	.....	.....
Congregational	23, 310	24, 456	27, 271	28, 146	25, 799	31, 825	.....	.....
Episcopal	18, 790	24, 876	20, 910	23, 220	4, 860	7, 020	7, 020	2, 160
Friends	23, 383	23, 953	24, 743	24, 748	10, 020	10, 020	10, 020	.....
Mennonite	3, 125	4, 275	4, 375	4, 375	3, 750	3, 750	3, 750	3, 125
Unitarian	5, 400	5, 400	5, 400	5, 400	5, 400	5, 400	5, 400	.....
Lutheran, Wittenberg, Wis.	4, 050	7, 580	9, 180	13, 500	15, 120	15, 120	15, 120	.....
Methodist	2, 725	9, 940	6, 700	12, 980	.....	.....	.....	600
Mrs. L. H. Duggett .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8, 480	.....	.....	.....
Miss Howard	275	600	1, 000	2, 000	2, 500	3, 000	3, 000	3, 000
Appropriation for Lincoln Institution	24, 400	23, 400	33, 400	32, 400	23, 400	23, 400	23, 400	23, 400
Appropriation for Hampton Institute	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040	20, 040
Woman's National Indian Association .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2, 640	4, 320	.....
Point Iroquois, Mich .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	900	600	.....
Plum Creek, Leslie, S. Dak.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1, 620	.....
Total	528, 905	562, 640	579, 218	611, 570	533, 241	537, 600	483, 505	379, 796

Should the reduction go on at the same ratio from year to year, the contract system will soon pass away. And we believe this to be wise policy, though we recognize and appreciate the grand work done by contract and mission schools. But the time has come, and public sentiment demands that the Government make ample provision for the secular education of all the Indian children and their proper training for the duties of citizenship. And our hope is that such provision and large appropriations by the General Government may not be needed many more years, and that the whole work of Indian education may be transferred to State control. This, we think, is the next step and the ideal aim. A good beginning has already been made in this direction by placing Indian children in the public schools, 487 having been in this way provided for during the last year. We believe that the mingling of the races in school will benefit both, and that prejudice against it will gradually subside. We heartily commend the purpose of Commissioner Browning to "further urge the system during the current fiscal year," and trust that it may be rapidly and widely extended. We recognize with approval the earnest efforts in this direction of the superintendent of Indian schools. In his late report he says:

In my endeavors to secure the cooperation of State superintendents of instruction I have met with hearty response from the States of Washington, Oregon, California,

Nevada, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and I believe that it will be possible in most of these States to transfer the work of Indian education to the State authorities within a comparatively short period. In some of these States I am informed that the subject will be submitted to the State legislatures within the near future, and that efforts will be made to secure suitable measures looking to such transfer.

There seems to be no good reason why the Chippewas, Menomonees, Oneidas, Stockbridges of Wisconsin, the great majority of the Indians of Michigan, the Chippewas of Minnesota, the Sac and Fox Indians of Iowa, the Omahas and Winnebagoes, the Santees of Nebraska, the Pottawatomies and Kickapoos of Kansas, the Cherokees of North Carolina, and others should not be cared for, so far as their educational needs are concerned, by the States in which they live. In most of these cases the Indians are self-supporting and fairly ready to live under the same laws with other citizens of the States.

A very important adjunct to the educational work is the valuable service rendered by field matrons and female industrial teachers. Four years' experience proves the success of this method of teaching domestic economy and elevating the Indian home life. No branch of education is more fruitful for the welfare of Indian women and for the protection of pupils returning to the reservations from boarding and training schools. We concur with the Commissioner in the hope that an increase of the funds for this service way be granted.

THE INDIAN TERRITORY.

In our last annual report, as well as in several previous reports, we expressed our conviction that a better government than now exists is needed in the Indian Territory—a government including the whole Territory, with authority and power to secure the protection and welfare of all the people residing therein without distinction of race. The time has come when the United States must see to it that law, education, and possibilities of justice for white men, as well as black men and red men, shall be firmly established and maintained in that Territory. The Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, under the influence of a few shrewd and selfish leading men, seem to oppose any change in their condition, and claim the right, under treaties with the United States, to be let alone and to manage their own affairs. But our clear conviction is that they have not faithfully observed the purpose and intent of those treaties. The language in which the original grant of the Indian Territory was made to the Five Civilized Tribes, as well as that by which they made subgrants to other tribes, provides plainly and emphatically that the lands "shall be secured to the whole people for their common use and benefit." That this has not been done is well known. A few enterprising and wealthy Indians have managed to occupy and use large tracts of fertile land, while the poor and ignorant have been pushed away into rough and almost barren corners. We believe it to be the duty of the United States Government to maintain its supreme sovereignty over every foot of land within the boundaries of our country, and that no treaties can rightfully alienate its legislative authority, and that it is under a sacred obligation to exercise its sovereignty by extending over all the inhabitants of the Indian Territory the same protection and restraints of government which other parts of our country enjoy. The Dawes Commission, appointed to negotiate with the Five Civilized Tribes, after a year of fruitless labor, have come to the following conclusion:

It is, in the judgment of the Commission, the imperative duty of Congress to assume at once political control of the Indian Territory. They have come with great reluctance to this conclusion, and have sought by all methods that might reach the convictions of those holding power in the Territory to induce them by negotiation and mutual agreement to consent to a satisfactory change in their sys-

tem of government and appropriation of tribal property. These efforts have failed, and the Commission is driven to the alternative of recommending abandonment of these people to the spoliation and outrages perpetrated in the name of existing governments or the resumption by Congress of the power thus abused.

They therefore recommend immediate legislation as follows:

(1) A Territorial government over the Five Civilized Tribes, adapted to their peculiarly anomalous conditions, so framed as to secure all rights of residents in the same, and without impairing the vested rights of the citizen Indian or other person not an intruder.

(2) The extension of the jurisdiction of the United States courts in the Territory, both in law and equity, to hear and determine all controversies and suits of any nature concerning any right in or use and occupation of the tribal lands of the several nations, to which any citizen Indian or other person, or the tribal government of any nation, is or may be made a party plaintiff or defendant.

In view of the general lack of information on the part of the public as to the legal rights of both parties under the treaties between the United States Government and the Five Civilized Tribes, and assuming that the American people wish to do nothing prejudicial to the rights of the Indians, this Board respectfully recommend that a competent officer of the Government, learned in the law, be instructed to make a careful examination of the treaties and prepare an opinion explanatory of this matter in detail.

LANDS IN SEVERALTY.

During the last fiscal year, under the act of February 8, 1887, patents have been issued to 4,466 individual Indians, and 2,385 allotments have been approved and now await the action of the General Land Office. In addition to these, 2,303 allotments have been completed, but have not received final action. The total number of allotments, including those made to homeless nonreservation Indians, up to the close of November, 1895, is 49,957, or more than one-fourth of all the Indians in the United States, not including the Five Civilized Tribes of the Indian Territory. (See table of allotments, page 11.)

This, considering that nearly nine years have passed since the general allotment act was approved, does not indicate that the work has been pushed with alarming haste. At the same rate of progress another generation must pass away before the work will be completed. Believing, as we sincerely do, in the wisdom and utility of the policy of giving homes and citizenship to Indians, we hope to see the work go on with increasing energy until the reservation system is broken up and every individual Indian shall have the opportunity which a homestead gives of becoming a man among men. Some will fail, as some of all races do. Some will miss their opportunities. Privilege always involves peril. Some will succumb to the evil influences and temptations which freedom always brings and go down to ruin. But we believe that the great majority, with proper industrial, moral, and religious training, will safely pass the period of trial and grow up into sturdy Christian manhood and enlightened American citizenship.

In this connection we desire to express our gratification at the progress made in allotments to the Southern Utes of Colorado. When completed this will finally settle, or at least materially help to settle, the long-agitated question of the removal of those Indians, in which our late colleague, Mr. Painter, took so much active interest.

One great peril to allottees is that they may be persuaded, for a little present gain, to alienate their homesteads by lease or sale. Acts of Congress, unwise in our judgment, make it easy to do this; but we are glad to observe that the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who has large discretionary powers in this matter, is fully aware of the