

**TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE
BOARD OF INDIAN
COMMISSIONERS. 1891**

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VARIOUS

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OF THE

BOARD OF INDIAN COMMISSIONERS.

1891.

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1892.

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REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF INDIAN COMMISSIONERS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 2, 1892.*

SIR: As required by the act of May 17, 1882, the Board of Indian Commissioners respectfully submit their twenty-third annual report.

The only change in the personnel of the board during the year 1891 has been the resignation of Mr. John Charlton, who has accepted another position in the Indian service, and the appointment of Elbert B. Monroe to fill the vacancy.

At the date of our last report the unhappy and disastrous trouble among the Sioux Indians was about coming to an end, but we had not sufficient reliable data for forming any conclusions as to the cause of the disturbance. From careful investigations since it has become clear that many causes contributed to the outbreak—causes of such a nature that such serious results could not have been foreseen. They are fully set forth in the comprehensive report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. One very gratifying truth has been settled, that education and Christian training make Indians peaceable and loyal. The testimony of Mr. T. W. Blackburn, the late superintendent of Indian education, who made a careful investigation in March last, as well as that of Rev. John P. Williamson, the veteran missionary among the Sioux, and of other competent witnesses, is that the educated and Christian Indians almost without exception remained firm in their loyalty to the Government, and did much to bring about the final settlement of the trouble.

INSPECTION OF INDIAN SUPPLIES.

The Board met at the warehouse in New York on the 5th of May to consult with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and to assist him in opening bids for Indian supplies and in awarding contracts. The number of bids opened and publicly read was 422. The samples of goods offered were carefully inspected, and the contracts awarded from day to day until June 4, one or more members of the Board being constantly present, and during the summer and autumn visiting the warehouse from time to time to witness the delivery of the goods, and the packing and shipping of them to the several agencies. Under the energetic superintendence of Mr. L. L. Robbins the tedious work of assorting, packing, and shipping 33,872 packages, weighing 5,033,327 pounds, was finished at an earlier date than usual, and the goods were

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delivered at the agencies before winter weather had closed the channels of transportation. The articles purchased were, in general, of excellent quality, and from many sources we have information that they have given entire satisfaction.

The clothing purchased is better than that furnished heretofore, but not so good in quality as we could wish. It is, however, the best that can be bought with the money appropriated by Congress for that purpose. With, for example, \$125,000 available to furnish to every Sioux Indian a suit of clothing, as the treaty with those Indians requires, it is manifest that 30,000 people can not have the very best clothing. The complaints which sometimes are made on this score can be met and remedied only by larger appropriations.

The supplies for the Pacific coast were purchased in San Francisco, bids being opened and contracts awarded July 8. Two members of the Board, Messrs. Charlton and Jacobs, were designated to assist in that work.

INSPECTION OF AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS.

During the year 1891 we have visited and inspected the following agencies: Eastern Cherokee, N. C.; New York; Omaha and Santee, Nebr.; Sisseton and Yankton, S. Dak.; White Earth, Minn.; Devils Lake and Fort Berthold, N. Dak.; and Forts Peck and Belknap, Mont.

Reports of these visits and inspections, which are transmitted herewith, indicate steady progress towards the end which all friends of Indians hope to attain—their complete civilization and absorption with the body politic as American citizens.

EDUCATION.

In the work of education a material advance has been made during the last year. Under the wise and energetic management of the Commissioner and his able assistant, the superintendent of Indian schools, the system of instruction has been more thoroughly organized, new training schools have been established, buildings have been improved, and appliances for industrial training have been largely increased. Provision has also been made by the appointment of district superintendents for more frequent and careful inspection of all the schools. We hope to see added a series of teachers' institutes, where all the teachers of the several districts may meet for consultation and discussion and mutual instruction. One such teachers' convention has just been held at Haskell Institute, near Lawrence, Kans.

The following official tables exhibit the attendance of Indian pupils in school for several years past:

Indian school attendance from 1882 to 1891, both years inclusive.

Year.	Boarding schools.		Day schools.		Totals.	
	Number.	Average attendance.	Number.	Average attendance.	Number.	Average attendance.
1882.....	71	2,755	54	1,311	125	4,066
1883.....	75	2,599	54	1,443	129	4,042
1884.....	89	4,358	78	1,757	162	6,115
1885.....	114	5,291	96	1,942	200	8,143
1886.....	115	7,290	99	2,370	214	9,660
1887.....	117	8,020	110	2,590	227	10,610
1888.....	126	8,705	107	2,715	233	11,420
1889.....	136	9,145	103	2,405	239	11,552
1890.....	140	9,865	106	2,367	246	12,232
1891.....	145	11,405	110	2,163	256	13,568

Enrollment and average attendance at Indian schools, 1887 to 1891.

Kind of school.	Enrolled.					Average attendance.				
	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.
Government schools:										
Training and boarding ..	6,847	8,998	6,797	7,296	8,572	5,276	5,533	5,213	5,944	6,738
Day	3,115	3,175	2,863	2,965	2,877	1,896	1,929	1,744	1,789	1,661
Total	9,962	12,173	9,660	10,261	11,449	7,172	7,462	6,956	7,733	8,399
Contract schools:										
Boarding	2,763	3,334	4,038	4,186	4,282	2,258	2,694	3,219	3,384	3,504
Day	3,044	1,280	1,307	1,094	886	604	760	662	567	502
Industrial boarding, especially appropriated for ..	564	512	779	968	1,309	486	478	721	897	1,163
Total	4,371	5,026	6,124	6,278	6,477	3,348	3,936	4,602	4,908	5,169
Aggregate	14,333	17,199	15,784	16,539	17,926	10,520	11,400	11,558	12,641	13,568
Increase					1,549					1,336

From these tables it will be seen that the total enrollment in schools of all classes and grades had reached, at the end of June, nearly 18,000, an increase of 1,549 over the previous year, and that the average attendance was 13,568, an increase of 1,336.

The appropriations for school purposes for the year ending June 30, 1891, were \$1,842,770, and for the current year the amount appropriated is \$2,291,650. We may, therefore, hope for as large an increase in attendance as during the past year. And, if Congress will continue to enlarge the means for education in the same ratio for three years more, we may hope to see nearly all the Indian children of school age provided for in the Government schools. It seems to us that it would be wise statesmanship, and wise economy to increase at once the appropriation to the three millions asked for by the Commissioner. He could then, without much delay, furnish the facilities for a common-school education to all Indian children. Then, under the rules and regulations authorized by law recently, and formulated, the Commissioner will be able to secure the attendance of all children of suitable age in the schools established and maintained by the Government for their benefit. And then it would be easy to put an end to the complications involved in the contract system. The religious societies could transfer to the Indian Bureau such schools as they have not the means to support, and those which they wish to retain could be built up into permanent institutions for the training of advanced pupils for teaching and other professional careers. Then, too, such societies could devote more means and force to direct missionary work. And never has been such work more needed than now. In this transition period, when the Indians are beset with difficulties and perplexed by the new duties and responsibilities of citizenship, they sorely need all the moral and Christian instruction that the churches of all denominations can give. And no part of our people, or of any people, presents a more hopeful field for earnest missionary work.

THE MOHONK CONFERENCE.

Our annual conference at Mohonk Lake, in October, was attended by a larger number than usual of the friends of Indian progress and civilization. The action of the President and the Secretary of the Interior in extending the civil-service classification to a portion of the Indian service, was heartily approved, and the further extension of the

principles and spirit of the reform, so as to effect a permanent tenure of office in the service, was recommended. Other topics discussed were the "Outlook for Contract Schools," the "Removal of the Southern Utes" against which a strong protest was adopted, and "The Legal and Political Status of the Indians" as affected by the general allotment act, and other recent legislation. The topic last named is thoroughly discussed by the Commissioner in his late report. It is a matter of great interest, and we venture to add a few suggestions with regard to it.

LEGAL STATUS OF INDIANS.

Among the questions which have elicited considerable discussion recently, has been that of the expediency of providing a special system of courts of law for the Indians on the reservations until they shall have accepted severalty and become citizens. There is a pardonable hesitation felt by jurists and legislators to engraft on the judiciary system any costly and cumbersome addition to meet a temporary state of things, and also the prejudice of conservatism opposed to *any* important change in so serious a matter. And yet the fact remains that law is needed for the reservation Indians, and that the effort to civilize them makes some provision imperative. Partly through the inaccessibility of courts, and partly through insufficient legislation, to cover all cases in which improving Indians may fairly demand the justice which law alone can give, they are suffering a practical denial of that justice in many instances; and, inasmuch as the present state of things may last a long time, it seems a matter of simple right to grant them some further benefit of law. We are, therefore, gratified to find this subject claiming the attention of Congress.

The so-called courts of Indian offenses have served a good purpose, although, as has been observed, they are more in the nature of courts-martial than civil courts, and practically register the decrees of the Indian agent. This makes the agency too much of an autocracy properly to train the Indians in a civilized administration of justice.

It has been wisely suggested, however, that these quasi courts might be made real courts presided over by justices having some knowledge of the law, and receiving a fair compensation for their services, an Indian jury trying the facts. These courts should be provided on all the reservations.

A system of court commissioners, related to the present United States courts, has been suggested for the graver causes, and with a right of appeal to the United States courts. This plan has met with favor, and if some well-conditioned system shall be devised, not too complicated, and so conditioned as to melt away of itself when the Indians become citizens, it seems to us it would be wise legislation.

A subsidiary result of no small value would be the introduction this would give the Indians to the use of courts of law, thus educating them in the legal customs of a civilized people.

SURVEYS AND IRRIGATION.

Another matter which should have immediate attention by Congress is an accurate survey of the Indian reservations and the irrigation of the arid lands. Without surveys and a distinct marking of boundary lines troubles will constantly arise between the Indians and white settlers about them and among Indians themselves. Cattle men are often quite willing to let their herds graze upon Indian lands, and it is impossible to prosecute and punish them for trespass unless the bounds of the reservations are clearly defined.

On the subject of irrigation we heartily concur in all that Commissioner Morgan recommends and urges. Its importance can not well be overstated. If we expect Indians to become farmers and self-supporting, the condition of these located on arid lands in several Western States and Territories must not be overlooked. To place them on their allotments and furnish them with a full outfit of farming implements is a waste of effort and money until there is added the one thing that is required to make their lands productive. We are glad to observe that in the agreement with the Crow Indians of Montana for the sale of a portion of their lands, provision has been made for the expenditure of a portion of the proceeds of the sale to render the lands retained and allotted productive by a thorough system of irrigation. The same stipulation can be made in other agreements where the conditions of the country require it. And where means can not, in this way, be provided, we hope and urge that Congress may make liberal appropriations for this purpose for all reservations where irrigation is necessary to successful farming.

ALLOTMENTS AND PATENTS.

The work of allotting lands in severalty to Indians and securing to them separate homesteads has been continued, and we see no reason to doubt the wisdom of the policy. During the year 2,104 patents have been issued and 2,830 allotments have been approved and the issuance of patents directed. Already more than 16,000 Indians have become citizens of the United States, and about 4,000 more, by taking allotments, are soon to become citizens. Adding the 7,610 in Oklahoma who have received allotments under agreements ratified by the last Congress, we have a total of 27,610 Indian American citizens, subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges as other citizens; and they have surrendered to the United States about 23,000,000 acres, which have become a part of the public domain and open for settlement and improvement. In their new position, not a little perplexing and bewildering, the Indians will still need kindly supervision and all the safeguards that law and humanity and instruction can throw around them. One thing especially needed to give full success to the allotment policy, which we have before urged, and to which, we see, with much satisfaction, the President has called attention in his late message, is provision for public improvements in the counties where Indians hold a large part of the lands. They have white neighbors, and the number will increase rapidly, as the unallotted lands are sold. Indian homesteads are inalienable and untaxable for twenty-five years. The white settlers must pay all the taxes for the support of schools and for all public uses. In such circumstances it will hardly be possible to maintain a kindly feeling between the races. The Indian will be regarded as a burden and his children will not be welcomed into the public schools. Relief from such evils can be given by withholding from the proceeds of lands purchased from Indians, or by direct appropriation, of sufficient funds to pay the Indian pro rata share of the taxes, according to the value of the lands held by them. This would elevate the Indian to equality with his white neighbor and remove the hindrance to progress and development which seems now involved in the inalienable feature of the allotment policy.

THE NEW YORK INDIANS.

In the evolution of the Indian problem the relation of the New York Indians has attracted much attention within the past few years. X