

Indian No Longer Called a Vanishing Race

Educational Campaign Among the Red Men Has Raised Birth Rate and Lowered Death Rate—Reservations Self-Supporting



FRIENDS of the American Indian—and he has many in this vast country—no longer speak of him as belonging to a vanishing race. On the contrary, they believe that he is on the right road toward regeneration, both physical and moral; that he will increase in numbers and become self-supporting within a few years. The drunken, lazy Indian, a victim of tuberculosis and trachoma, will, they say, be succeeded by a steady, hard-working, healthy man who, having learned to live in a wholesome way, will contribute his share to the nation's wealth instead of depending upon its generosity.

We have long been accustomed to the idea that the red man was worthless and shiftless and unable to adapt himself to the white man's civilization. We have heard that even the "educated" Indian went "back to the blanket," and could not retain the self-respect that the Government teachers sought to instill in him. We have taken it for granted that the Indian must succumb, must die, as all decadent races die.

But now one learns that the Indian is to be saved. His health is better; the birth rate of the tribes has gained ascendancy over the death rate; the red man has given promise that he may become a great factor in the stock-raising industry, for which he seems to be peculiarly fitted. And this great change has virtually come about in the last three years.

How has it been accomplished? Through the doctor, the nurse, the hospital, the teacher. The Indian is learning that to be healthy he must keep himself and his dwelling clean, that he must throw away the whisky bottle. His squaw has been taught how to keep her babies well. She knows now why one Indian baby out of three has died before it reached the age of 5. And her older children—they, too, have been taught the things that will make them strong and preserve their race. Moreover, the vocational training they are receiving is expected to lead to a new era in Indian life and accomplishment. It is through the children, who are rapidly learning the lessons of hygiene and sanitation and are wiser than their parents in this respect, that the Government hopes to lead the red man away from the things that were rapidly destroying him.

The man who is largely responsible for the health education campaign is Cato



Indian Girls Learning to Cook at Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas.

Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the last three years. Mr. Sells is a lawyer and banker, also a farmer and stockman.

He believes that the Indian is worth saving and can be saved. Soon after he took office he reached the conclusion that he could not solve the Indian problem without Indians, and that the nation could not educate the Indian children unless they were kept alive. So he called for more doctors and dentists and nurses and began a campaign to save the lives of Indian babies. The Indian Service was stirred into new activity. The warfare against disease was begun and systematically carried on. The field matron, the farmer, the teacher, indeed every employe of the Indian Service, was enlisted in the fight, and increased appropriations were spent in enlarging the medical staff and building new hospitals.

The results of this campaign were laid before the Lake Mohonk Conference on Oct. 18 by Dr. Lawrence W. White, Superintendent of the Lac du Flambeau (Wis.) Indian School, who told first of all why the Indian race had passed into a state of decadence. Said Dr. White:

For a great number of years we have had chanted into our ears the facts concerning a

dying race until we have become well accustomed to it, and, I fear, have commenced to take it as a matter of fact. For it was true the number of Indians was becoming smaller each year, and this was largely due to the faulty manner in which he had taken up the white man's civilization. He was taken from a domain as large as the continent itself and compelled to occupy very restricted areas before he was taught the proper rules of sanitation. The bow and arrow were supplanted by the rifle and high explosives before he was taught the proper conservation of his natural food supply, which he then had a means of rapidly destroying. The white man inflated him both by precept and example into the mysteries of drowning his many troubles in a bottle of whisky without first telling him that in that same bottle of whisky lurked death and destruction to his mental, moral, and physical being.

He was rudely introduced to and infected with our most malignant infectious diseases without having been given any adequate means of coping with them, and after having been infected was left to his own primitive methods of effecting a cure. He has been given food to which he was not accustomed without a knowledge of how properly to prepare it. To sum it up, he had been forced into a new world and compelled to live a new life without a rule or law yet learned by which he might adjust himself to his new surroundings.

Is it a thing to be marveled at that he should become the prey to all the ills to which mankind is heir? A race of people who had naturally been of powerful physique

Baby Contest at Fort Totten Indian School, North Dakota.
(C) S. Peterson, Devils Lake, S. D.

had been reduced to a state of weakness, a condition of degeneracy had overtaken the former red man of the forest, who had roved at will over vast areas. His habitation was now more or less permanent, and in order to be healthful must be kept clean. This he did not understand nor undertake.

Children were born into surroundings which were far from sanitary, with possibly a drunken father and mother, neither of whom had made any preparations for the arrival, the care, or the maintenance of such a child. Is there any wonder such a one frequently succumbed before the end of the second summer after its advent into such a vale of tears? Those who escaped death by a narrow margin through the years of childhood and reached manhood and womanhood arrived there too frequently only to become a subject to be preyed upon by some such disease as tuberculosis or trachoma. Too often the young Indian arrived at adolescence already scarred and disfigured by the former, and frequently blinded by the latter.

It was not strange, said Dr. White, that these people, neglected in health, had passed into a state of decadence and, unless this condition were arrested, would soon have no further use for their valuable land, which the Government so zealously guarded. Then he went on to describe the health campaign. It was not a simple task. Conditions were deplorable, the hospitals were neither numerous enough nor properly equipped to meet the demands upon them. And the staff of physicians was much too small. More trained nurses were needed, also field matrons, and it was necessary to spread knowledge along the lines of sanitation. How these conditions were met is best described in the figures presented by Dr. White:

In 1912 the medical force of the Indian Service consisted of one medical supervisor, two ophthalmologists, one physician expert, one assistant physician, eighty-nine agency physicians, and fifty-three contract physicians.

This force has been increased until now it consists of three medical supervisors, seven ophthalmologists, 130 agency physicians, seventy-six contract physicians, seven field dentists, and six field nurses.

In addition to these there are also substantial increases in the number of hospital nurses, field matrons, and miscellaneous hospital employes, the exact number of which cannot be easily computed.

Besides this, note the increase of general health appropriation known as "Relieving Distress and Prevention, &c., Diseases Among Indians": Fiscal year 1911, \$40,000; 1912, \$60,000; 1913, \$90,000; 1914, \$200,000; 1915, \$300,000; 1916, \$350,000, and 1917, \$350,000.

Dr. White told how the money had been expended, giving a long list of the hos-

pitals built or under construction in 1914 and 1915, and the titles of heal pamphlets distributed in the field. What has been the result of this expenditure of funds? To quote again:

The Indian's constitution has been restored, his health conditions improved and death rate decreased wherever there are Indians to be found. Babies who before had been born into surroundings contributing every cause for an early death now come into the world where previous preparation has been made, in a clean home or in a hospital where the mother is cared for and taught properly to care for her offspring. Such babies come to stay, and are making statistics showing to the world that the Indian is not a dying race. Besides, they are filling happy homes where before they had proved to be the despair of heart-broken parents who had seen them come only to find a place in their affections and then be taken from them by diseases they knew not how to control.

Those who had been suffering pain and blindness from the effects of trachoma have now found relief and live to bless the good Samaritan who brought this relief to their doors. The old and young are coming to realize that gruesome death lurks in filth and that disease is spread by such agents as the common drinking cup, spitting upon floors, and the presence of flies in the house.

These results are further proved by the health reports sent in from the whole country. In proof of this statement I quote the following:

Dr. Newberne, Traveling Medical Supervisor, reports on San Xavier: "The birth rate for the last fiscal year as expressed in terms of the number of births to the thousand of population was a little more than forty, while the death rate was not much above sixteen per thousand, which is no higher than that of some of our best cities."

Dr. Newberne, on Sac and Fox, Oklahoma, states: "From the foregoing figures it will be seen that the aggregate increase in the male population is twelve and that for the female population thirty-four, or a combined increase of forty-six. This, in spite of the fact that an epidemic of smallpox occurred on the reservation which caused fourteen deaths."

Dr. Newberne, Poncas: "Into the Poncas Tribe there were born eight males and eleven females, a total of nineteen, during the last fiscal year, while their deaths amounted to only five, a net increase for the year of fourteen."

Dr. Newberne, Shawnee Agency: "The last compiled vital statistics makes the following comparisons of births and deaths for the fiscal year 1915: eighty-five births, fifty-two deaths; excess births over deaths thirty-three."

Dr. Newberne, Turtle Mountain: "During the fiscal year the number of births was 100, the number of deaths was forty-six, thus showing a net increase in population of sixty."

Dr. Newberne, Fond du Lac: "During the last fiscal year there were born thirty-four children, while the death rate for the corresponding period was twelve, showing a net gain in population of twenty-two."

Dr. Newberne, Leupp: "The number of births for the last fiscal year was 110, the number of deaths was thirty-four, thus leaving an increase in the population of seventy-six."

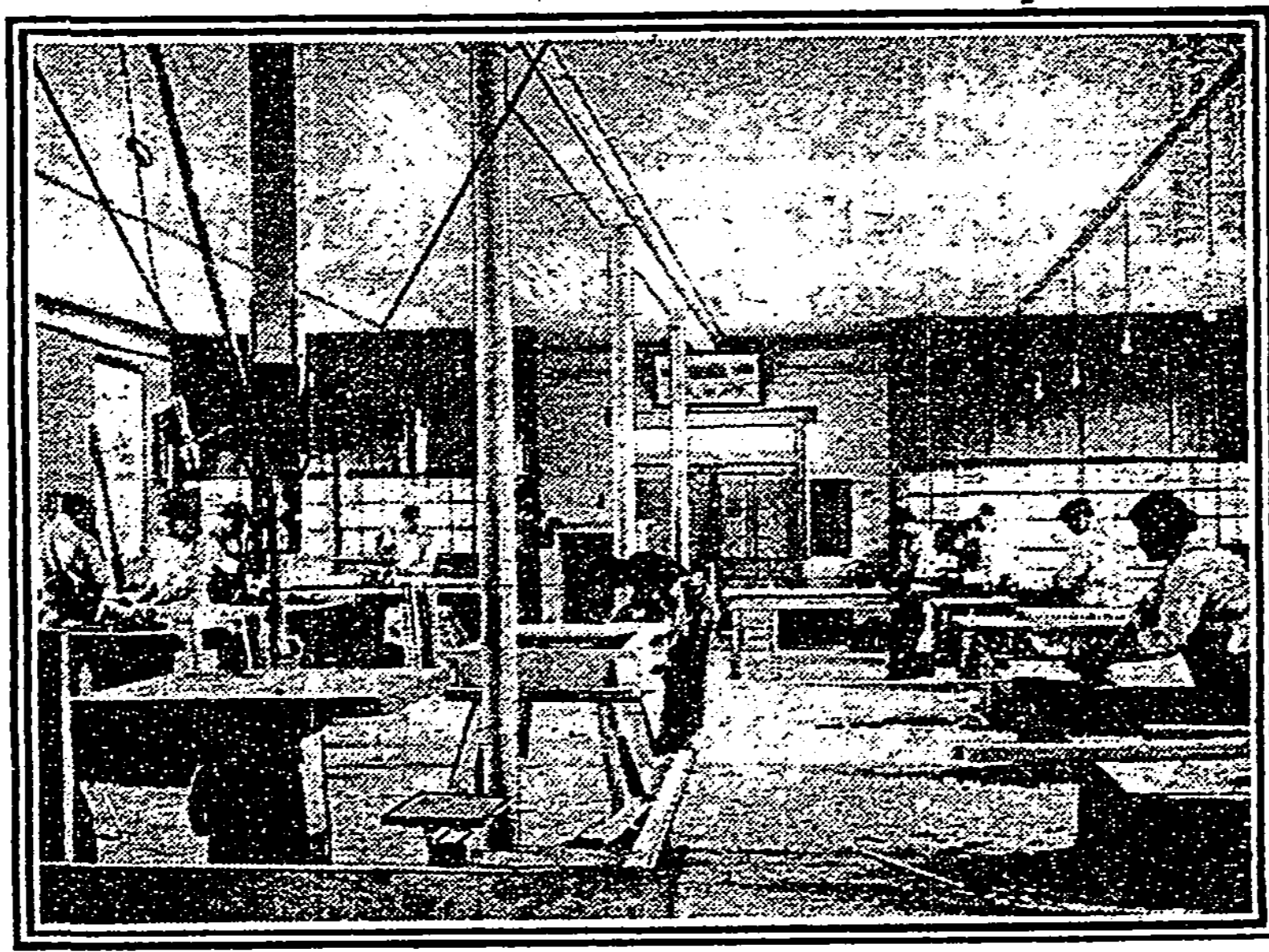
There are innumerable reports of this very same kind, coming as they do from almost every agency in the service, almost every one showing more or less increase.

To verify the fact here stated, that is, that this condition has come to stay and is still improving, I will call your attention to these figures which have been collected by States and are accurate, but exclude the Five Civilized Tribes and certain unattached Indians of California, data upon which are not at present available.

VITAL STATISTICS, 1916.

Total Indian population.....	209,221
Total births.....	6,092
Total deaths.....	4,570
Births over deaths.....	1,522

So much for the results of the health campaign. Now what is the Government doing to educate the regenerated Indian, to cut him loose from the slavery of a dependent life and make him self-supporting and productive? Another speaker



Instruction in Carpentry at Carlisle Indian School.

gave many facts in this connection to the Lake Mohonk Conference. He was H. B. Peairs, Supervisor of Indian Schools for the United States. There are approximately 80,000 Indian children of school age, thirty-four non-reservation boarding schools, similar to the white college, seventy-three reservation boarding schools, similar to the white high school, and about 250 day schools, which correspond to the white common school. Altogether, they constitute the greatest school system in the United States under the direction of one man, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

In his address Mr. Peairs said that the lack of permanent policies in the Indian Service has been the greatest cause of retardation. "At one time," he added, "we have gone like a whirlwind in one direction; at another we have been called upon to retrace our steps and start on a new road. Again we have been compelled to mark time while new recruits have been drilling and getting ready to command. Oh, for a period when we may go steadily on to the goal for which we are all striving!"

Mr. Peairs explained the educational goal. He said that it was necessary first of all to make the Indians an English-speaking people, and for that reason the teaching of English, which unlocked the doors to all knowledge, was of primary importance. Subjects relating to health and sanitation were emphasized, so that students might return to their homes with definite, practical ideas and with fixed habits as to correct living and good health. The vocational work, varied in its nature, aimed to prepare the Indian for a life of profitable labor. Summarizing, he said:

The course of study is divided into three divisions, primary, pre-vocational, and vocational. The primary includes the first three grades, the pre-vocational the next three, and the vocational contemplates a four-year course above the sixth grade.

The first or primary division is the beginning state, and emphasizes English, health, and manners and right conduct. The second or pre-vocational division is the finding stage, and places the importance upon the obtaining of knowledge, both academic and industrial, which is intimately and concretely related to home-making and home-keeping.

From the beginning of the primary work to this point the course parallels the public school courses in the essentials of the aca-

demic work. This is desirable because so many Indian children are going into public schools every year. A very important feature of the work of the pre-vocational division is that of helping each pupil to discover himself and to determine upon the course to pursue during the remainder of his years in school. This responsibility is placed upon a vocational guidance committee, which is provided for in every school where pre-vocational grades are maintained.

The third or vocational division is the fitting stage, wherein each pupil, having chosen a definite vocation, studies and trains for skill in order that he may be prepared, technically and practically, to meet the competition of life, and that he may be a self-supporting, independent citizen.

The term of school life for a great majority of Indian youths is at best very short, therefore it was deemed of special importance that some steps be taken and some plan formulated to extend educational opportunities beyond the days of actual school life. As a beginning of a program looking to the establishment of regular extension courses for Indian young people who have been compelled to leave school with a very limited education, the committee [the Committee on Course of Study] recommended that community meetings be held frequently at all schools which have an adult Indian population accessible or tributary thereto. These meetings should be made bases and centres of influence for all of the activities and interests of the community, or they should help to create health and proper public sentiment toward such activities.

In connection with community meetings, some forms of extension work might be undertaken, especially with the returned student. The returned student organization should offer a peculiarly valuable medium for such work. The ex-student represents one of the direct returns upon the investment which the Government has made in Indian education. It is an investment which should be developed to the fullest extent, and its development has but begun when the student goes home from school. Then, if ever, the student needs friendly interest, wise counsel, and sympathetic support to hold him to his highest ideals and possibilities.

Another fact taken into consideration in preparing the course was the undeniable one that eventually, and soon in many instances, Indians will become full-fledged citizens and will be compelled to assume the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, as well as to be permitted to accept the privileges. Under these circumstances they should be intelligent in all matters pertaining to citizenship. With this in mind the subjects of manners and right conduct and of civics were introduced in the primary grades and continued throughout the entire course. The primary course in civics is certainly new and unique.

The new course of study was introduced in the Indian schools on Feb. 1 of this

year, and to date it has been found to be practicable and comprehensive. "It is believed that the preparation and introduction of the new vocational course of study," said Mr. Peairs, "marks an epoch in Indian education, and, through the emphasis of vocational education and training, the beginning of a new era in Indian life and accomplishment."

Mr. Peairs might have said that the Indian had already begun a new era—an era of industry. Early this month Commissioner Sells returned to Washington after having supervised the sale at Chicago of thirty-four carloads of Indian cattle from the Crow Reservation, Montana. Fifty-one carloads were shipped, seventeen being sold at Omaha, and the whole lot brought \$97,993.42. All of these steers were range-raised and grass-fed, not a pound of corn or feed other than grass and hay ever having been fed to any of them. Including the increase of the herd, the profit of the Crow Indians on the original purchase in twenty-seven months, after paying all expenses, has been \$350,000. In giving these facts Commissioner Sells said:

These sales from the Crow Reservation are the beginning of large sales from this and other reservations. It is a demonstration of the wisdom of the policy of utilizing the grazing lands of the reservations for the benefit of the Indians and positive indication of the responsive disposition of the Indians when given opportunity with sympathetic encouragement to do things for themselves.

About three and a half years ago I inaugurated, and have since aggressively pursued, a policy of farm and stock-raising betterments among the Indians, the immediate purpose being to make them producers rather than altogether consumers. Shortly after becoming Commissioner of Indian Affairs I discovered that the agricultural and grazing lands on Indian reservations were not being utilized as they should have been; that the large part of their grazing lands was leased to white men for a minimum rental, and likewise much of the agricultural land; that the Indians were not making proper industrial progress and that their income from the leased lands was much less than should have been derived either when rented or cultivated by themselves; all of which meant lack of progress and large appropriations by Congress, neither of which was in any sense satisfactory, and all demanding radical change. To remedy this condition the Indian Office has made a vigorous and unceasing campaign with gratifying results. For example, three years ago one reservation in the Northwest had 2,800 acres under plow; last year there was in cultivation by Indians on this reservation 15,000 acres. The advancement is not so great everywhere as there, but it is exemplary of the progress being made by the Indians as farmers on practically all the reservations.

It cannot be expected that all Indians shall advance from plainmen to intensive farmers in one generation, but that they are now making tremendous progress is apparent throughout the entire country, many of them being among the best and most prosperous farmers in the vicinity of their residence, frequently comparing favorably with their white neighbors. As stockmen they have been even more successful. The Indian is a natural herdsman. He loves horses and readily adapts himself to raising cattle and sheep. During the last three years the Indian Bureau has purchased with funds of the Indians (not a dollar of the amount invested being gratuity) more than two million dollars' worth of cattle, horses, and sheep for tribal herds and individual Indians, most of the purchases being for breeding stock and young stuff—helpers for breeding purposes; at the same time an industrious effort has been made to dispose of inferior male animals.

There is every probability that the Indian will soon become the cattle king of America, a great factor in the world's wool market and a large producer of horses.

If the Indians continue to progress as rapidly for the next ten years as they have for the last three years, they will be practically self-supporting, with corresponding reduction in appropriations.



Pupils Receiving Instruction in Gardening, Phoenix, Arizona, Indian School.