

Self-Determination for American Red Man

Native Race Proposed for Full Citizenship in a Bill Now Before Congress

By JOHN WALKER HARRINGTON.

SELF-DETERMINATION for races hitherto held in tutelage, whether sternly repressive or benevolently assimilative, is the fashion and tendency of the moment—one of the results of the breaking up of old groups and the shattering of old habits and traditions which has followed the great war. What we have heard most about is self-determination of lesser European races—Poles, Lithuanians, Czechoslovaks, Jugoslavs, and the rest. There is also the case of the Irish. What most people, perhaps, have not remembered is that we have in this country also a race held in tutelage—not the imported negro, who has by law all the rights of a citizen, but the native Indian, who has been excluded from those rights and whose status has been that of the ward of the nation, not the citizen.

Now, in the opinion of leading Indians and men who are not Indians, but have been in close touch with the Indians' development, the time has come to make an end of this anomaly.

To give the Indian citizen's rights is the purpose of a bill favorably reported from the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives.

This bill was drafted by Charles D. Carter, a member of the House from Oklahoma, and himself of Indian blood, and its advocates are looking forward hopefully to its speedy enactment into law.

The measure provides that every per-



Zit-kala-Sa (Red Bird)
 Wife of Capt. Bonnini



One Road, a Sioux



Captain Raymond T. Bonnini, U. S. Army,
 of French and Sioux Descent



Courtesy Museum of American Indian.

Wisconsin Indians of the Progressive Competent Type Who Desire Citizenship

son born of the Indian blood shall be called a citizen of the United States and be subject to all civil and criminal laws, without in any way interfering with his tribal rights, and that he shall, upon his competency being established, receive a patent in fee for his lands. The appointment of three commissions to pass upon the qualifications of applicants is provided.

It is the position of those Indians who have attained citizenship after an ardu-

ous struggle for their rights that the shackles of paternalism have been on their race long enough. On the average, they say, the Indian is just as well equipped to look after himself as is the man of any other strain. Sometimes, they add, he is much better equipped than many of the aliens who have in recent years landed on these shores.

The bill excepts the Five Civilized Nations and the Osages because these Indians already have citizenship. They

rights. The best service he has rendered, however, is in being what he is—for surely any one who has succeeded in the real estate business, has made a fortune as an up-to-date farmer, and is the organizer of a bank, has furnished a demonstration that he is well adapted for taking care of himself.

Oklahoma has two members in the United States House of Representatives who have Indian blood in their veins. William Wirt Hastings is of Cherokee parentage. He was born in 1866 in the old Indian Territory. On his graduation from the Cherokee Male Seminary he went to Vanderbilt University, which gave him the degree of LL.B. He became in 1896 the attorney for the Cherokee Nation and represented it in the winding up of its tribal affairs in Washington. He was a delegate at large to the National Democratic Convention at Baltimore in 1912. Besides serving as a member of the present Congress Mr. Hastings is the regular attorney for the Cherokee tribe in all its public relations.

The name hardly suggests Indian kinship, and yet Charles Daugherty Carter was born near Boggy Depot in an old fort of the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. He attended as a boy the Chickasaw Labor Academy near Tishomingo, I. T. He worked on a ranch as a cowboy for a while and then became a clerk in a store. Mr. Carter rose to high place in the councils of the Chickasaws, serving as School Superintendent and Mining Trustee and occupying various other positions. He is a Director of the Ardmore Bank in his home town of Ardmore, Okla., and he is the member of Congress responsible for the Indian enfranchisement bill.

That the American Indian can undertake exacting financial labors and duties is shown by the career of Dihihi, whose cognomen in good Cherokee means "The Killer." He is a good Indian, however, and by taking a quick, sharp glance at our Liberty bonds we may see his signature, Houston B. Teehee, the Anglicized form of his name. He is the Register of the Treasury of the United States. Born in that part of the Indian Territory now known as Sequoyah County, he started to paddle his own canoe at an early age. After his graduation from the Cherokee National Male Seminary he became in turn traveling salesman, bank cashier, lawyer, and Alderman. He served for two terms as Mayor of Tahlequah, Okla. Next Mr. Teehee went to the Legislature, resigned to become District Attorney, and from that post proceeded to a responsible position as probate attorney for the Indians of the Cherokee tribe.

In many walks of life the Indian has distinguished himself in competition with the white man. General Ely Parker served on the staff of General Grant, while another Parker, known as Gabe, was connected with the United States Treasury, and a third of the name, Arthur C. Parker, is State Archaeologist of New York. Indians who have become successful as physicians are Dr. Carlos Montezuma of Chicago, the Apache, and Dr. Charles A. Eastman, who is also a writer. The literary work of the race has been graphic and not without force and originality, from the days of Schoolcraft, a writer of Indian descent, from whose books Longfellow drew the inspiration for "Hiawatha," to such modern writers as John M. Oskison, journalist and teller of tales.

In recent years the writings of Zit-

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kala-Sa, a Sioux woman of pure blood and direct descendant of Sitting Bull, as well known perhaps by her married name of Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin, have attracted attention in the leading magazines, where she appears as a champion of the rights of her race. She is the Secretary of the Society of the American Indians, which since its founding eight years ago at Ohio State University has done much to advance the cause of equal rights for the original Americans. Her husband is Captain Raymond T. Bonnin, who is of French and Sioux lineage. He served in the United States Army during the European war. The Bonnins are types of the progressive, intellectual Indians who are seeking to advance the cause of the less fortunate of their breed and to bring about equal rights for all.

"The Indian and his friends," said Mrs. Bonnin the other day, "when they ask for citizenship for the red man, are answered: 'If we do not protect him unscrupulous white men will defraud him of his very eyeteeth.' In the supervision of his property these bureaucrats defraud the Indian of his human right to gain experience—earth experience—first-hand. By overpaternalism they are certainly killing the manhood and the initiative of our race. In despair, I ask, Why not disfranchise or, at least, restrict and restrain by bureau supervision these so-called unscrupulous white men and enfranchise an honest, law-abiding people, the Indians of America? It is so un-American to manipulate the Indians' property, lands, moneys, and oil wells without the Indians' consent, on this unwarranted phrase. 'The Indian will be defrauded if we do not protect his property.' Who are we?"

Zit-kala-Sa believes that the present Indian Commissioner, Cato Sells, is doing all that he can to help the Indian, but that his hands are often tied by conditions over which he has no control.

This view is upheld in a measure by the official declaration of Mr. Sells, issued on April 17, 1917, which may be taken as a full expression of policy.

"The time has come," declared the Commissioner, "for discontinuing the guardianship of all competent Indians and giving even closer attention to the incompetent Indians, that they may the more readily achieve competency. Broadly speaking, a policy of greater liberalism will henceforth prevail in Indian administration to the end that every Indian as soon as he has been determined to be as competent to transact his own business as the average white man, shall receive full control of his property and have all his lands and moneys turned over to him, after which he will no longer be a ward of the Government."

At the same time the Commissioner promulgated the rule that able-bodied adult Indians of less than one-half Indian blood shall receive as far as may be, under the law, complete control of their property. Patents in fee shall be issued to all adult Indians of one-half or more Indian blood who may after careful investigation be found competent, "provided that, where deemed advisable, patents in fee shall be withheld for not to exceed forty acres as a home."

Further details are given in the text. The document ends as follows:

"This is a new and far-reaching declaration of policy. It means the dawn of a new era in Indian administration. It means that the competent Indian will no longer be treated as half ward and half citizen. It means reduced appropriations by the Government and more self-respect and independence for the Indian. It means the ultimate absorption of the Indian race into the body politic of the nation. It means, in short, the beginning of the end of the Indian problem. In carrying out this policy, I cherish the hope that all real friends of the Indian race will lend their aid and hearty co-operation."

The other day Alanson Skinner, an ethnologist connected with the Museum

of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, was talking of this latest determined effort being made by the red men to gain equality.

"Although this is a political and economic question," said Mr. Skinner, "every scientific man who has come in contact with the American Indians cannot but be impressed with their fine qualities and their independent natures. I have spent many months with different tribes of Indians and I have never been treated with more courtesy anywhere than by them. The fact that the average Indian has so highly developed a sense of justice himself should make us feel all the more inclined to see that he has all the rights to which he is entitled. That the American Indian is well able to take care of himself, if he has equal opportunities with the white race, is very well demonstrated."

Although ever since 1641 the Caucasian race on this continent has been temporizing with the Indian problem, it has never really solved it. The first grants which Kings and Emperors in Europe were accustomed to give to lands which they had never seen took no account of the Indians except in some indefinite way which provided for the conquering of the "heathen" or the "savages."

As the white men grew stronger they pushed back the frontier into a succession of new Americas and gradually put the Indians on reservations. Three of these great tracts of Indian country were established, and then in 1878 the policy of having smaller reservations came into vogue. Congress in 1887 enacted a land severalty bill which was aimed at the abolition of the agency and the final entrance of the remnants of the Indians into full citizenship. It provided that to each Indian should be allotted a tract of land of from forty to 160 acres, and this method of dealing with the vexed problem had the sanction of the United States Supreme Court.

Although much progress has been made since the early days of the colony of Virginia, when it was set forth that "an Indian could not hold office, be a capable witness or hunt on patented land," there is a great deal to be done, in the opinion of the champions of the race, before they are in possession of complete rights.

The Indian population of the United States is placed at 336,243, of whom 85,674 are of school age, although provision has been made for the instruction of only 63,476, leaving 22,972 eligibles without the means of getting an education.

Ten thousand North American Indians, more than two-thirds of them volunteers, were in the armies of these United States in the European war. In the Hospital Corps and with the ambulances Indian women were enrolled. The race contributed to the Red Cross large sums, for many of them are wealthy; they helped in all kinds of war work both here and over there, and bought \$1,000,000 worth of Liberty bonds.

The case for the Indian is summed up in a set of resolutions adopted by a committee representing all the organizations concerned. Its Chairman was the Rev. Henry Roe Cloud, an Omaha Indian and a graduate of Yale University. Among its members were S. M. Brosius, the Washington agent of the Indian Rights Association; the Right Rev. H. L. Burleson, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of South Dakota; John W. Clark, Secretary of the National Indian Association; Mrs. Bonnin, (Zit-kala-Sa,) Secretary of the Society of the American Indians; the Rev. Thomas C. Moffett, Superintendent of the Presbyterian Indian Mission Work, and the Rev. Francis S. White, Domestic Secretary of the Protestant Episcopal Board of Missions.

It is the unanimous opinion of these experts that the Indian problem should be solved by making the Indians part of our population, instead of keeping them longer apart as aliens and quasi-outcasts.