

## MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

### INTERESTING COMMENT ON AN ADDRESS OF COMMISSIONER SELLS



THE Missoulian of Missoula, Montana, of March 29, 1914, contains one of the finest and fairest articles on the liquor question which we have ever read, taking an address of Commissioner Cato Sells as a theme. The article follows:

“Am I my brother's keeper?” It is a question which has been asked ever since the birth of man. Always it is asked by somebody who is seeking to evade responsibility. Always it is the alibi offered by those who would dodge the issue. It is the cowardly defense of the guilty. The man who asks this question may be classified at once as not right.

A day or two ago, The Missoulian printed an official letter from the commissioner of Indian affairs. It was addressed personally to each of the six thousand employees of the bureau over which Mr. Sells presides in Washington. It was devoted to the problem of suppressing the sale of liquor to Indians. Its tone was lofty and its plane was high. The letter should be read by every man and woman, by every boy and girl. For its scope is wider than the mere relation between booze and the red man. It takes in the whole question of personal responsibility; it is an able presentation of the liquor problem.

“I believe,” says the letter, “that the greatest present menace to the American Indian is whiskey. It does more to destroy his constitution and invite the ravages of disease than anything else. It does more to demoralize him as a man and, frequently, as a women. It does more to make him an easy prey to the unscrupulous than everything else combined. If I say nothing more to you tonight that leaves an impression, let it be this one thought: Let us save the American Indian from the curse of whiskey.”

Commissioner Sells does not ignore the question of responsibility, either. In the course of his letter, he says: “There is nothing that could induce me, since I have taken the oath of office as commissioner of Indian affairs, to touch a single drop of any intoxicating liquor, and this regardless of my attitude on the prohibition question.”

There is the whole proposition. The primary purpose of the letter was, of course, to discuss with the employes of the Indian service the question of suppressing the sale of liquor to the Indians. And it carries out that purpose admirably. But with that phase of the letter we have no concern this morning. We might comment upon what we know,