

field and believing that concentrated effort will materially improve the system, the Commissioner created in the Indian Office a new division, designated "Purchase," which will handle exclusively the purchase and transportation of supplies.

One of the biggest things accomplished by Commissioner Sells is what might be termed a reorganization of procedure relative to the probating of the estates of minor Indians in Oklahoma. He says in his report that the minor children of the Five Civilized Tribes are perhaps the richest average children in the United States, which condition results from the fact that in allotting the Oklahoma Indians the children were given the same number of acres of land as their parents and share equally in tribal funds. Consequently, when Congress in the act of May 27, 1908, conferred upon the county courts probate jurisdiction, there was involved a greater amount of probate work than existed anywhere else in the United States; that many guardians were appointed without regard to their fitness, and insolvent bondsmen accepted, and that it was not uncommon for the lands of minor Indian children to be sold on appraisements influenced by prospective purchasers, and for inadequate prices. Excessive compensation was many times allowed guardians and unreasonably large fees paid to their attorneys. Under these conditions, the property of Indian children was frequently so ravished that when final reports were called for they were not forthcoming, and estates were often found to have been wholly dissipated and their bondsmen financially irresponsible. Altogether it developed a condition demanding speedy and radical reforms.

He arranged for conferences to be held with the county judges, prosecuting attorneys, district judges, and others interested in betterments for the territory covered by the Five Civilized Tribes. These conferences were attended by practically all of the county judges, at which time all matters and things were exhaustively discussed and rules of probate procedure were adopted by the county judges, were approved by the president of the State County Judges' Association, and soon thereafter were officially adopted and promulgated by the Judges of the Supreme Court of the State of Oklahoma, and have since been in full force and effect.

To insure the prosecution of the probate work in a systematic and effective manner, the Commissioner organized a force consisting of the best obtainable attorneys, each of whom was chosen on his merits after careful and exhaustive investigation, to assist and co-operate with the the county judges. This force was made up in part of attorneys employed at the expense of several tribes and partly at the expense of the United States under authority of Section 18 of the Act of Congress of June 30, 1913.

Widespread and gratifying results have already been accomplished.