INDIANS SHOW THRIFT

DOING WELL IN THEIR DESERT HOME

THE Christian Science Monitor, published in Boston, of the date of November 20, 1915, has a splendid article on the Papago Indians as found by Commissioner Sells when he visited them last summer. We reprint the following:

Down in southern Arizona, near the Mexican border, lives a tribe of native aborigines about whom the average American citizen knows practically nothing.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells, who recently made an extended inspecting tour of Indian schools and reservations in the Southwest, is the first Indian commissioner to have visited the Papago Indians. He spent more than a week with them, traveling several hundred miles through the sands that he might acquire first-hand information, and he brings back a fascinating story of a primative but progressive Indian tribe, battling manfully and successfully against unusually adverse conditions under which any branch of the Caucasian race doubtless would have given up in despair.

Commissioner Sells gave The Christian Science Monitor the following statement of facts concerning these people and their needs:

Locally the territory occupied by these Indians is known as "Papagueria," the Papago country. It embraces that part of Arizona lying between the Southern Pacific railroad on the north, the Mexican boundary on the south, the 110th meridan on the east, and the 113th meridian on the west. This is perhaps the dryest and most treeless desert in the United States, the habitat of the cacti and the Papago Indians almost exclusively.

These Indians are a happy tribe, numbering between 6000 and 7000, living in bands or villages scattered over an area about 120 miles long (east and west) by about 90 miles broad. Their villages vary in size from a few to as high as 130 houses, many of the larger settlements housing over 500 inhabitants. Their houses are usually built of adobe, plastered over a framework of ochatillo stalks or ribs of the sahuaro cactus, the roof being of the same material, but quite thick.

Some of the more progressive Indians are beginning to use modern home equipment. Limited means, however, have denied such "luxuries" to most of these people, who today still cut their grain with a hand sickle, thresh it by tramping, winnow by tossing in the air on a windy day and grind by hand, rubbing one stone upon another—primitive methods in vogue among the ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago.