

## Facts About Oklahoma Indians

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each Osage was paid during the past year more than \$7,000.00.

The prodigious increase in this source of wealth has been developed during the last three or four years. Under the original lease on the Osage reservation the royalty was one-tenth of the oil and \$50.00 per annum for each gas well. The present royalty paid by the operators is one-sixth of the value of the oil and gas produced. These two are now leased separately, the gas leases being in large tracts and covering practically all of the reservation. The leasing of large tracts under gas leases permits the lessee to develop the gas deposits systematically as they are needed to supply the consumer. Formerly, when the oil and gas deposits were covered in the same lease, large quantities of gas were wasted because the operators, as a rule, desired oil and permitted the gas to escape so that drilling for oil could be continued. Recently, the waste of gas has been practically eliminated on the Osage reservation, to the great advantage of the Indians, the gas lessees, and the public.

Oil leases are made in 160-acre tracts, which are sold at public auction, bidding on the bonus above the royalty, about 200 quarter sections being advertised for oil leases every three or four months. Since the adoption of the regulations in August, 1915, oil leases have been sold covering over 300,000 acres at a bonus in excess of \$29,000,000.00, and gas leases covering more than 500,000 acres at a bonus of more than \$1,000,000.00. In addition to the amounts paid as bonus, the tribe has received as royalties on oil and gas since 1901 nearly \$20,000,000.00, of which all but about \$2,000,000.00 has been received since July 1, 1911. During the same period of time approximately 114,500,000 barrels of oil have been produced from the Osage reservation.

The twenty-five year period during which the mineral rights are reserved to this tribe will expire in 1931. The Osage Indians maintained that the minerals belong to all the members of the tribe, share and share alike, and have repeatedly and justly requested that action be taken to extend the trust period for a term sufficiently long to remove the minerals. A bill, which I believe is fair to all concerned, is now pending before congress to extend the trust period twenty-five years. This bill further provides that the Osage Indians shall pay three per cent. on the royalty received by them for the purpose of constructing and maintaining roads and bridges in Osage county; and that the lessees' share of the production shall be subject to the present gross production tax of the state of Oklahoma. Since the present annual value of oil

and gas being produced on the Osage reservation is in excess of \$50,000,000.00 it would mean, should the legislation be enacted, that Osage county would receive several hundred thousand dollars and the state approximately \$1,000,000.00 annually not now collectible, and the lessees would have their leases extended accordingly.

Osage county would in this way, and not otherwise, soon become one of the best road and bridge improved counties in the southwest; the whole public, including the surface purchasers, who bought for surface prices and who bear none of this expense, would profit from the use of improved road and bridge facilities and the consequent largely enhanced land values; oil and gas leases would have unequaled highway transportation conditions for development purposes; the Indians an extension of the trust period, and Oklahoma would recover into the treasury of the state a million dollars annually for more than a quarter of a century.

### Other Oil Wells of Oklahoma

Along the southern border of the Kiowa Indian reservation and in the bed of the Red river, which divides Oklahoma from Texas, there is being developed an oil field of vast importance. An extraordinary legal controversy affecting many millions is pending which involves the southern border line of the reservation.

The proximity of these oil properties to the famous Burk-Burnett fields has caused Indian allotments in that vicinity to be keenly sought by oil operators, and, while this industry is practically in its infancy, the Indians are receiving handsome cash bonuses and in all probability their future revenues will approximate their more wealthy neighbors.

### The Zinc Mining Industry

In the northeastern part of the state, and bordering the great mineral field of Joplin, Missouri, is the Quapaw agency. Here the mining for zinc has been developed to an enormous degree.

The members of the different bands under the Quapaw agency were, under various acts of congress, allotted their lands in severalty, for which trust patents were issued to some of the bands and to others patents in fee with restrictions as to alienation, etc. Congress in 1897 authorized these Indians to lease their lands without supervision for agricultural and grazing purposes for three years and for mining and business purposes for ten years. Certain conditions, however, were imposed denying this privilege in some instances. Practically all of the allotted lands within the mining district of this reservation were leased by the allottees some time ago without supervision. Many of these Indian lessors were in fact incompetent to protect their own interests.

(To be continued next issue)