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TEN ACRES OF INDIANS

A most interesting article from the pen of Louese Freman appeared in a recent issue of Health First concerning conditions at the Burns, Or., Indian School. Burns is in South-eastern Oregon and is in many respects quite isolated. We are of the opinion that the article in question will be of more than ordinary interest to our readers, so here it is:

Ten acres of Indians! Doesn't that sound interesting? If in spite of the sage-brush, the ticks and the profusely scattered tin cans, we can aid in the development of clean, good, law-abiding Indian citizens, the attempt will not have been in vain.

A mile and a-half west of Burns proper, lies this Paiute Indian Village and to this post I was detailed for a period of six months to help relieve and eradicate the terrible eye disease, tracoma, so prevalent among Indians. Secondly, to formulate some kind of constructive health program. Interesting? Yes, indeed.

Here I found ten acres in not the choicest location, boasting twenty little two-room houses of wood construction, set in a square, save for one line of three houses on one inside of said square, housing upwards of 120 people. To further complete the square we have in one corner an all modern "teacherage" housing a fine schoolroom, quarters for teacher and family, a government dining room for children where an excellent noon-day meal is furnished, and a kitchen and bath. Off the school room we have a fine bath room and it shows much wear, I'll assure you. Beside this is a water-tower, a public bath with four showers, hot and cold water, a public laundry with six stationary tubs, and many a fine looking washing have I seen on the lines at this upit, and that on a Monday morning.

These people are a primitive, suspicious people in spite of the long contact they have had with their white neighbors, and I've found it takes a long time to get their confidence and interest in the betterment of their surroundings. They are good workers and always willing and ready to help. Never have I had an Indian refuse any sort of task asked of him and if at any time my car was stalled between the unit and town,—for roads are bad,—a whole village of Indians would come to my assistance.

Making rounds on the campus, which by the way is done daily, keeps one in close contact with these people and I note, on such days as I pass up a house or two, they are prone to remind me and ask the why and wherefore. That helps. On such rounds one notes, clean windows, highly polished in many homes, an attempt at bettering the interiors of these homes.

Some are fair, while others are still so that I cannot even see any betterment, yet on the whole they are much better.

Now our schoolroom—capacity 25 desks. There you will find mounted the finest kind of busy work, enough blackboard spacing, with work on it such as would be worthy of competition with any white school room of the same grade. Good looking faces, black heads, blacker eyes and to me, they are indeed a fine group.

Here too one notes—especially a stranger—much timidity, but education, time and effort will soon eradicate that. We have an enrollment of 23 or more with seventeen of pre-school age and it is the last named that I have especially been interested in and they respond splendidly. None of our children are below par in weight but it is indeed hard to teach the needs of sanitation where seventeen like above mentioned, thrive so well in their surroundings.

We enjoyed a good winter, school attendance was not broken into badly but we kept vigilant daily inspection, weeding out "suspects" isolating and treating same and so the winter has gone and we have no scabies, no impetigo, so characteristic of these people, and no epidemics. To date we had one case of mumps, very mild.

Eye treatments were started in the school room. They responded beautifully. Little by little adults and the real old fell in line and finally an order was issued whereby no Indians could seek employment from the whites, who needed and refused eye treatment.

Winter months are mostly idle months, save for trapping, on any of our Indian Reservations yet many of our men worked most of the winter at the sawmill here and each evening took their eye treatments. Results are much better than could be expected in so short a time of treatment.

Right now yards are being raked, trees are being planted around two or three homes. A frugal beginning, but a trend in the right direction. This year we have added much needed playground equipment, hoping to help hold the interest of our children at home instead of on the streets of Burns. We have "teeter totters," basket ball court and equipment. A slide and swings will soon be put up. At play you can pick out, most any day, a Red, no let's say "Black Grange," Babe Ruth and I am quite sure we have a Jack Dempsey.

The children are interested in athletics and are good athletes. They are especially fond of movies and one

(Continued on page 4)