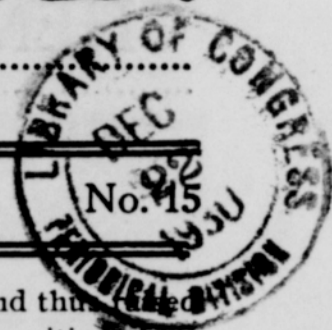


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ROLLING THE STONES OF SISYPHUS

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*"If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again."*

Someone has said that "the average person looks upon the Indian as a quaintly picturesque and unwashed portion of the primeval landscape." And here the interest of our average individual ceases. If you ask the average citizen what he thinks of the Indian problem, he is apt to reply that he does not think,—that the Government has full responsibility with respect to the Indians of the country. And thus is the question disposed of.

For a great many years the Indians of this country have meant much more to the federal Government than simply an "unwashed portion of the primeval landscape." We have believed that the Indian possesses a native intelligence and capacity for development into a useful, self-sustaining, law-abiding, industrious citizen. Whether or not our confidence in him is misplaced time alone will demonstrate. And now that we are entering upon a new and greatly enlarged Indian program it may be interesting briefly to review our past efforts in trying to solve this great human problem.

Back in the year 1914 we find the Indian Bureau launching a great intensive health, educational and industrial program for the Indian, and from a published report of that year we read that—

"The policy of the Government is to divide, as rapidly as practicable, the communal or tribal holdings among the Indians in severalty. It is apparent that since the greater part of the wealth of the Indian is in lands and that his home is usually in the agricultural or grazing areas of the United States, the greater number of Indians must inevitably become farmers or stock-raisers.

"Here we have a people, according to the statistics of the Indian Service for the fiscal year 1913, numbering 330,639, owning a vast area of land aggregating 72,146,544 acres, valued at over \$600,000,000 (and with individual funds held in trust for their benefit amounting to many millions more.) For these people the Government is constantly called upon to make gratuity appropriations.

"The Indians have up to this time, made but comparatively little use of their vast holdings. We are now making strenuous efforts to get the Indians to make beneficial use of their own property. Indians are being urged to put more land into cultivation and to purchase cattle to put on their grazing lands. Employees of the Indian Service are being directed to bring about an industrial awakening among the Indians, so that they

may become, by their own efforts, independent and thus lead to a higher social and moral standard of American citizenship.

"To solve the problem, we have during the last few months been working out a general program to meet the conditions upon each reservation and for each tribe. A general review of existing conditions is now being made to determine what should be done to develop the resources of each tribe, and particularly to determine those things which each tribe or group needs to enable the family or individual to operate its lands to best advantage. In those instances where at the present time the Indians have good agricultural lands, and where they have facilities to cultivate and develop them in a manner similar to their white neighbors, and where they are properly encouraged, they have responded much more than has heretofore been deemed probable.

"An earnest effort is being made to develop a labor market for the Indian where, through lack of resources, he must depend on his own efforts. It has been found that where the Indian works day by day beside the white man in various occupations he rapidly imitates the white man's manner of living, the white man's ideas and the white man's civilization. The Indian laborer has become a factor in railroad works, in timber operations, in the construction of irrigation projects, and in the harvesting of crops. In such manner is the Indian increasing his influences to himself and to the community where he lives, slowly doing away with any prejudice of the past.

"The old days are gone for the Indian forever and he must meet the changed conditions which demand the development of his property to meet the economic necessity of the time. The burden is upon the Indian with the aid of the government to develop his property and while he is making the most of his industrial opportunities he should make a tremendous advance toward the highest standards of civilization and American Citizenship."

A year after this intensive program was launched we are presented by the Indian Bureau with the following encouraging report:

"SOME OF THE INDIAN BUREAU'S ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR 1915"

1. Health conditions are considered of first importance. Six new hospitals were constructed during the past year in furtherance of a vigorous health campaign. Every Indian hospital bed not necessarily occupied with those suffering from disease or injury is being utilized for the Indian mother in childbirth. Education and protection are highly important but everything is regarded secondary to the basic condition which makes for the perpetuation of the race.

2. The Indian Office has taken aggressive steps toward the development of improved vocational training and has adopted plans which will accomplish the education necessary to instill in the Indian youth the responsibilities of self-support and citizenship. Emphasis is being placed on agriculture and domestic science. This program will be carried out in all Indian schools.

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