

CHEMAWA AMERICAN

Printed at Chemawa, Oregon, and Devoted to the Interests of Indian Education

VOL. XXXVI

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1934

NO. 6

COMMISSIONER COLLIER A WELCOME GUEST

CONFERS WITH GRAND RONDE and SILETZ COUNCIL-
MEN on WHEELER-HOWARD BILL

In simple direct speech the Honorable John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, gave the Siletz and Grand Ronde Indians gathered at the Salem Indian school Sunday morning a clear explanation of the Wheeler-Howard act and how it might apply in their case. The commissioner addressed an assembly of Siletz and Grand Ronde Indians, students of the Salem Indian school, employees of the school and visitors, numbering approximately 500 in all.

The meeting opened with a song by the school choir. Following, James T. Ryan, superintendent of the Salem Indian school, introduced George P. LaVatta, well known Fort Hall Indian employed in the Service as guidance and placement officer, who in turn presented the commissioner.

In his talk, Mr. Collier briefly reviewed the principal advantages of the Wheeler-Howard act which was passed at the last congress. The commissioner, appreciating the feeling of distrust of these new promises said:

"As one looks over the history of the dealings of the white man with the Indians, the dealings of our government with the Indians, one doesn't find any more humiliating chapter than the chapter connected with your affairs. It was the old story of pledges made to the Indians. The Indians were compelled to abide by their part of the contract and the government broke its word again and again. It happened here as it happened in so many parts of the country. It happened for so long a time, and over and over again, that it is very natural for Indians to feel distrust of the government. So many fine things have been said to you in the years gone by, and none of them worked out. Why should you believe now? I understand the attitude of the Indians."

The commissioner explained to the Indians the points of advantages which might and could be applied to them, touching on abolition of the allotment system, proposed land purchase, revolving loan fund, changes in civil service requirements for Indian employees within the Indian service, educational facilities made easier through additional funds made available for loans

proposed special court for hearing of Indian claims against the United States government.

When his talk was over, many of the Indians presented their questions to Mr. Collier for answer. His friendly manner and deep interest displayed in the Indians and their problems made a lasting impression on those gathered to hear him.

Following a luncheon prepared and served by students of the Indian school and a reception in his honor, the commissioner left Chemawa for the State of Washington where he will visit other Indian jurisdictions.

* * *

The Hon. John Collier was a most welcomed guest at Chemawa on December 9th. His coming was much anticipated and we appreciate the honor. He is a congenial gentleman and is very sincere in his fight for the American Indian. He has given his all and it is up to the Indian race to do their part.

WINTER SOLSTICE TAKES LIMELIGHT

Christmas, a variation of Christmas, owes its name to the fact that in Roman Churches a mass in honor of Christ's birth was celebrated on that day. In many languages the word Christmas means birthday, as the French word Noel, the Italian Natale, and, indirectly, the German Weihnachten, or sacred night, alluding to the birth of Christ as the event that consecrated it. The correct date of Christ's birth is unknown, nor was the day observed as Christmas until two hundred years after his birth, but Yuletide had been observed five hundred fifty years before, the Persians keeping the holiday as we do at the present day. Then Rome took up its observance and borrowed customs from Egypt, Persia and Greece, adopting also the mistletoe and its rites from the Druids. Julius, pope of Rome in 400 A. D., fixed upon the 25th of December as being the winter solstice, and to replace the pagan rites and festivals the church introduced grand masses of Christmasses. Gradually came Christmas carols or Christmas hymns, then Christmas trees and a revival or survival of the pagans rites used with a Christian significance. Christmas now has come to mean simply the day, where as formerly it was a season. Our English ancestors observed the holiday for twelve days and nights, finishing with Twelfth Night. In Ireland the little altar is kept up with its candles and decorations, until "Little Christmas," two weeks from Christmas, and the Christmas decorations may be kept until Candlemas Day, the 2nd of February, when they must all be taken down unless the inmates wish to see a goblin for every leaf on the wall.