

## ◀ HOME ROOM ▶

### SURVEY OF THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION

The Flathead Indian Reservation is located in Sanders, Lake, Flathead, and Missoula counties in Northwestern Montana.

The Reservation is bounded on the West by the Cabinet and Lodo National Forests and holdings of the Anaconda Mining Company; on the East by the Missoula and Flathead National Forests and on the North by the Cabinet, Blackfeet and Flathead National Forests and private holdings.

The Flathead Reservation was established by the Treaty of July 16, 1855, and provided not only for the Salish but for small bands of Kalispell, Pend'Orille and Kootenai Indians. The Catholic Church has maintained a mission, school and hospital at St. Ignatius for many years. It is the only church that has done work on the Reservation.

There are 2999 Indians enrolled on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Of this number approximately 700 make their homes away from the Reservation, leaving 2,300 Flathead Indians enrolled and actually living there. In addition to this number there are 261 non-ward Indians living on the Reservation, which brings the total resident population to 2,651 Indians.

The Confederated Flathead Tribes have adopted a Constitution and By-Laws and elected a Tribal Council under it.

There are four Co-operative Livestock Associations on the Reservation. They were organized during the winter of 1934-1935.

The greatest resource of the Flathead Indians is the Flathead River power site. More than 250,000 horse power of available energy waits to be harnessed to turbines that can produce billions of kilowatt hours of low-cost electricity.

This natural wealth belonged to the Indians by virtue of solemn treaties, but the Indians had nothing to say about its use and distribution for many years. Prior to 1934, it was the Interior Department and not the Indians who decided what should be done with the "white coal" of an Indian reservation.

### BLACKFEET RESERVATION

The Blackfeet Reservation is situated in the northwestern part of Montana and comprises the

major portion of Glacier County and part of Pondera County.

The reservation contains 1,527,712 acres, 278,399 acres of which is owned by outsiders; of the remaining 1,247,313 acres, 54,411 acres are held in tribe ownership and 1,190,882 acres are in allotments. The population is 4,350 on roll, with 3,741 on the reservation and 609 absent. In 1937, the Indians had farmed 8,400 acres of non-irrigated and 580 acres of irrigated lands, while 17,760 acres are non-irrigated. Irrigated land of 8,670 acres were leased to whites. Land irrigated by Barger Fisher project is 5,000 acres, by Seville project is 7,000 acres, a total of 12,000 acres. Land that should be irrigated is 8,000 acres more.

The drainage of the northern part of the reservation flows into Hudson Bay, while that on the southern part flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The general direction of the drainage is toward the northeast.

Much of the western and northern portion of the reservation is made up of a transitional foothill zone lying between the Great Plains on the east and the Rocky Mountains in the west. The central and eastern parts of the reservation are moderately rolling plains with occasional high ridges, the surface of which is generally covered by glacial drift.

On the eastern edge of the reservation and in the vicinity of Cut Bank, there has been considerable petroleum development. Although producing wells are on tribal lands, the extent of these oil fields and the effect of development in the economy of the Indians, has not been completely determined.

The reservation has a timber resource estimated at 124,700,000 board feet, composed of 40 per cent Lodgepole pine, 30 per cent Engelmann spruce, 20 per cent Douglas fir, and 10 per cent Aspen. All timber areas are adjacent to the west boundary of the reservation where the elevation is relatively high and the precipitation is heavier. Over much of the timbered area, the stands are so dense that trees do not attain large size. Much of the forest is valuable chiefly for watershed protection, though it has a convenient and valuable source of forest products such as poles, posts, fuel, house logs, and timber.

The nearness of the reservation to the Glacier National Park, where wildlife is protected, suggests that the reservation would be benefited by the wildlife over-flows from the park and that the

(Continued on Page 5)