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The Indian as a Constitution Maker

It is noted by close observers that the Indians sent as delegates from the various tribes of the Indian Territory to the Oklahoma constitutional convention are in character and ability away ahead of the white delegates from Oklahoma Territory. The tribes put forward their best men, graduates of Carlisle, Harvard, Chicago and other universities; lawyers, bankers, railroad directors and the like; some pure of blood, others half-breeds; but all measuring well up intellectually. Oklahoma, on the other hand, selected its delegates in the usual Western fashion, mostly by corner grocery caucuses, where whiskers and cheap oratory count more than other factors in securing votes.

Oklahoma was allowed 55 delegates, Indian Territory 55 and the Osage Nation 2. So much more respectable was the Indian crowd that the Osage delegates and the brightest of the Oklahomans went over to it at once. The plans of Oklahoma for bossing the convention were thus squelched and the Indians took all the offices and all the important chairman of the convention. They have put their stamp on every important feature of the constitution.

It is the Oklahoma delegates who, for want of further "per diem," are threatening to go home—as some have already done—and leave the convention without a quorum. So the rich and generous Indian brother is paying his white brother's expenses, to enable him to stay on duty. And the Indians say the constitution will be adopted and submitted "on time," despite the gloomy reports of newspaper correspondents.

That convention is giving a lot of people some new ideas about the intellectual and legislative capacity of "poor Lo." One illustration of his attitude is the fact that he has, despite Oklahoma opposition, imposed a prohibition clause on the whole population of the embryo state, instead of on the Indian Territory portion only, as was contemplated by the act of Congress.—Pioneer Press.

