DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

FOR THE

FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1920

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1920
we have several suits now being prosecuted in an effort to undo some of the
gross wrongs that have been committed.

GENERAL AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS.

The limits of this article will hardly permit extended reference to the tribes
in the western part of the State, numbering approximately 17,000 and embrac-
ing the Kiowa and Comanche, Cheyenne and Arapaho, Shawnee, Iowa, Klaw,
Kickapoo, Otoe, Pawnee, Ponca, Pottawatomie, Sac and Fox, and other small
bands. They complete the large Indian population of a great State, and, I am
proud to say, hold a forward place in the progress of our continental Indian
life. In the agricultural industries that hold the roots of civilization they are
among the active and prosperous of their race.

The area of land cultivated by the Indians in Oklahoma has doubled in the
last six years. This significant fact is a striking approval of the policy which
has been pursued for helping these Indians make the most of their lands and
create an interest in their greater possibilities.

I have encouraged the sale rather than the leasing of inherited lands, and
have insisted, especially in the case of noncompetent Indians, on the expenditure
of the proceeds for improvements, and have refused to allow the Indians to lease
such improved homesteads. As most of the Indians inherit other land, this
plan is resulting in the upbuilding of Indian homes which compare favorably
with white homes of the community. It results also in eliminating the lease
income upon which the Indians are apt to rely for support and which removes
the incentive for vigorous effort to promote their own welfare and materially
better their condition. Generally the Indians use the proceeds of the sales of
their inherited lands for the betterment of their homes. This is a radical
change from the old system which permitted the Indian to lease practically all
of his land, living on the rentals as long as they lasted, and then merely existing.

With few exceptions, due to varying conditions, the Indians of Oklahoma have
had sufficient money of their own to equip them for farming. There were some,
however, who were not fortunate in having inherited land sales to aid them or
oil or gas royalties to provide revenues. These have been assisted from the
reimbursable (repayment) funds which Congress has wisely appropriated dur-
ing the past six or seven years.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

I have thus far referred chiefly to the material interests of the Oklahoma
Indians, which in no sense means that less importance is attached to their edu-
cational status. No civilization can long endure unless the work of the schools
is built into its foundation, and no better example of achieving the self-sustain-
ing development of the Indians by means of education is found than in Okla-
ahoma, where there have been evolved through many years those Government
boarding and day schools for Indian children which have recently approached an
ideal system with standards and practice comparable to those of the best schools
elsewhere.

The educational facilities for the Five Civilized Tribes had their origin, and
for some years their management, under the tribal system of government, which
was unfortunate because too often selfish and political considerations prevented
efficient instruction, economical methods, and material upkeep. Although there
was Federal legislation as early as 1906 providing for taking over the control
of these schools, it was not until 1910 that their entire management passed to
the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Since then they have come within the
general plan of organization, superintendence, and course of study as applied
to other Government schools for the Indians, and to-day, under capable in-
structors and economical supervision, they rank with the best schools of like
grade in our Service. No greater wealth has come to the Five Civilized Tribes
than these schools have brought to their children, who are there taught the
things most practical and valuable in real life.

Eastern Oklahoma is now quite generally well supplied with public schools
to which, as a rule, Indian children are cordially admitted, and our efforts for
some time have encouraged this attendance, for we have great faith in the
public-school system as an effective agency for shaping the right beginnings of
our democratic life. There is good statesmanship in the law which permits the
use of Federal funds in payment of tuition for the attendance of children of
nontaxed Indians in the public schools, and we employ this legal provision
wherever practicable. I am glad to say that of the 20,000 children of these
tribes who attend school nearly 17,000 are now in the public schools.

Outside of the Five Civilized Tribes and principally in western Oklahoma,
schools are maintained under thorough organization on the Cheyenne and
Arapaho, Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, Seger, and Seneca Reservations, several schools
on other reservations having been recently closed because of adequate public-
school facilities in those localities. All schools in operation are well attended
and their work is conducted under the complete and uniform course of study
promulgated in December, 1915, which outlines and grades the academic work
and prevocational and vocational courses from the first to the tenth grade for
use in all Government Indian schools.

THE CHILOCO INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

In the northern part of the State, just across the State line from Arkansas
City, is situated at Chilocco, Okla., one of the finest nonreservation schools in
the Service. This plant is ideally located in a magnificent farming country
and has a large farm and pasture splendidly adapted to diversified agriculture.
The plant is modern and properly equipped. Its climatic conditions and soil
possibilities are similar to those where its students reside, who are principally
from Oklahoma. Full vocational courses, including the tenth grade, are given
in home economics for the girls, and for the boys in the mechanic arts and
trades, but with special stress upon agriculture and stock raising. Large
classes of bright, progressive students are graduated each year, and the at-
tendance is usually beyond the normal capacity.

I have been much interested in this school and am convinced that the con-
ditions there offer a great opportunity for the Indians of Oklahoma to have an
educational institution the equal in all modern essentials of State agricultural
colleges, and I am taking all the steps to have it so constituted. Its capacity
should be increased to at least 800, which would necessitate considerable addi-
tional building. The best obtainable stock and equipment are being procured,
and I hope soon to see here an institution of learning that will furnish ambi-
tious Indian boys and girls practical and scientific training in farming and
stock raising and in all the requirements of sanitary and cultured home making.
Such a school should draw many students from other States who are able to
pay the cost of this better education, and its value to the Indians at large, and
particularly to the State of Oklahoma, would be more than can now be
estimated.

Here I am pleased to say that President Cantwell, of the State Agricultural
College at Stillwater, is giving to the Chilocco Indian School splendid co-
operation by way of personal advice and now and then the brief detail of
members of his faculty for like service.