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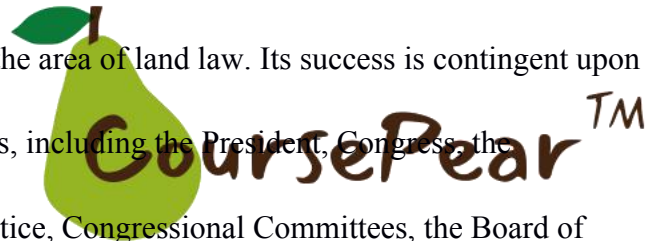
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1885 Board of Indian Commissioners Annual Report Research Paper

The Board of Indian Commissioners is an advisory body to the United States Federal Government on Native American laws, policies, and practices. The Board of Directors identified a number of potential adjustments in its 1885 Annual Report in order to address recognized flaws in the existing system. This essay identifies five flaws. The potential changes that I want to highlight in this research study include land laws, education and training, citizenship, racial integration, and Indian relocation. I believe that these shortcomings in the current system will remain unaddressed in the near future for the following reasons: (1) these reforms do not appear to be a high priority for the Government, (2) complex bureaucracy is a significant impediment to achieving desired change on time, and (3) there is little or no buy-in from the Indian leadership, the Indians, or the white man. Each of these justifications is applicable to a variety of changes.

The first change I'd want to address is in the area of land law. Its success is contingent upon the concerted efforts of numerous stakeholders, including the President, Congress, the Departments of the Interior, Treasury, and Justice, Congressional Committees, the Board of Indian Commissioners, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, reservation agents, and the Indian population. As one can see, the necessary transformation is a difficult undertaking. It will need



much leadership, time, participation, expertise, and a strong commitment on the part of all parties.

Congress must enact legislation pertaining to the reserves, and the Executive Branch,

Commissioners, Agents, and others are responsible for enforcing the laws. All of these factors are

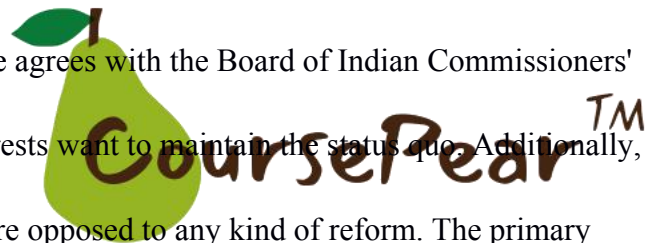
essential to the success of the change. Additionally, one must overlook the importance of the

local Agents. Reservation management is not a simple job. The reservation encompasses more

than 137 million acres and has a permanent population of 264,389 people.

The Annual Report of the Board is filled with evidence from Agents and Christian Missionaries indicating Indian men are open to property ownership, especially patent land. Changes in land ownership have been generally supported by agents from California, Arizona, Wisconsin, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. The demand for land has increased, as has the willingness to cultivate the land. According to some, Indian land ownership may be the single most hopeful indication of a potential answer to the Indian man's transformation in society. Many Indian men who favor property ownership via patents continue to have reservations. They have often been promised land in the past without seeing any benefits. This is the main reason they advocate for patenting land and providing it for a lengthy period of time, such as twenty--five years. Not everyone agrees with the Board of Indian Commissioners' reform recommendation. The entrenched interests want to maintain the status quo. Additionally, some Indian Chiefs favor the status quo and are opposed to any kind of reform. The primary impediment to the future of land allocation is the Federal Law, which must be amended.

Reservation property is still owned in common, and no authority exists to grant individual Indians

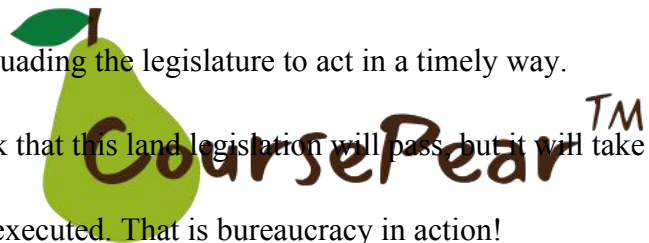


ownership. With legislative reforms, land ownership would certainly become more appealing to Indians.

Without necessary land law reform, the Indian race's development would be stifled. The white man's desire for land and the Indian's lack of land both contribute to the problem of insufficient house ownership. Indians stay on the reservation at the President's discretion and are subject to removal at the Government's discretion. This circumstance impedes the Indians' development. Indians have often faced deportation threats, creating feelings of uneasiness. As a result, the Indians may be unwilling to accept an allocation of land, title, or no title. The land seems to be a goal shared by all men. The Indians can readily feel the force of land law because they have lived in its absence.

According to the Commissioner's Annual Report, a sizable proportion of Indians want reserve territory subject to white man's rules. This property is located on Indian Reservations and is of limited value in terms of an Indian's successful agricultural future. I think that Congress would be more receptive to land legislation at this time if the property was restricted to the reserve. Legislative bodies will very certainly regard this legislation as posing little or no danger to their power. The true challenge will be persuading the legislature to act in a timely way. Regrettably, I do not see this occurring. I think that this land legislation will pass, but it will take years for it to be authorized by Congress and executed. That is bureaucracy in action!

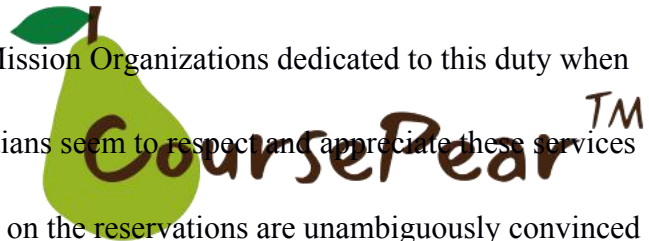
My next reform priority is education and training. On reservations, the reservation agent is responsible for this duty. The agent must establish a training facility using the resources given by



the government and missionary groups. Christian Missionaries and other staff members do the real training. The aim of education and training is to develop motivated, skilled, and effective employees capable of improving their economic chances in this race. Individuals get educational instruction to improve their knowledge and intelligence. Training is carried out with the aim of acquiring particular abilities. The President of the United States appoints territorial agents for a four-year tenure. They may be provided with a residence on the reserve. Agents are critical to achieving changes at the local level. They play a critical role in providing access to education and training.

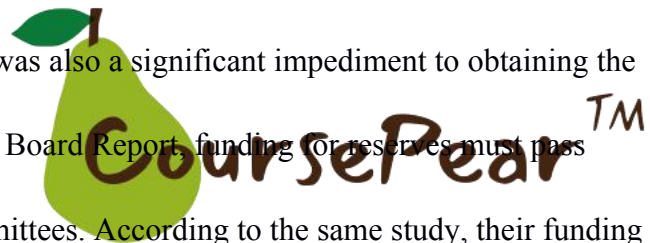
Agents are dedicated to educating and training Native Americans. The Board Report emphasizes the critical nature of this job and their dedication to it. Diverse reservations provide comparable and/or dissimilar kinds of instruction. Several reserves have on-site and off-site boarding schools. Language and mathematical fundamentals seem to be accessible to anyone seeking instruction. Certain Indians get instruction in home construction, carpentry, farming, industrial labor, household duties such as housekeeping or cooking, and gardening, among other skills.

I was struck by the amount of Christian Mission Organizations dedicated to this duty when reading the Board Report. The majority of Indians seem to respect and appreciate these services and engage whenever feasible. The operatives on the reservations are unambiguously convinced that the Indians of the continent are superior to the barbaric races of the opposite hemisphere. Local workers believed they were worthy of preservation. That is the educational and training



system's main objective. Indians who get knowledge and training may glimpse the light of civilization. In 1885, there were 320,000 Indians living on reservations in the United States, and about one--third of them advanced civilizational as a result of education and training. However, about 200,000 members of the Indian population have not matured from their past. Each year, about \$650,000 was spent on education and training for the Indian people. Church groups provided about one--third of this total. Church mission organizations and local agents were doing an excellent job of meeting the training requirements on the reservations; unfortunately, Congress showed little interest in assisting them. The Government's lack of control and interest, as well as the complexity of its bureaucracy, all had a significant effect on the success of this endeavor.

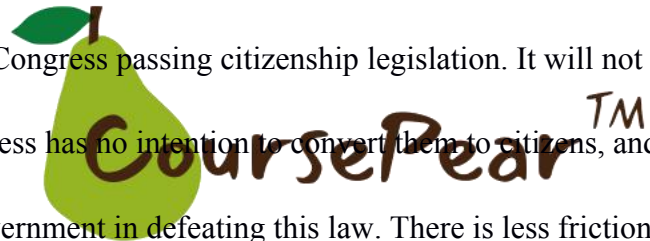
Numerous instances of the Government failing to provide the Indians with necessary resources are documented in the 1885 Board Report. According to Indian Affairs, the national Government possessed monies totaling more than \$4 million last year that was designated by the treaty for Indian Reservations but were not distributed to them. A large portion of this money would have been used for training. All those engaged in the administration of reserves realized that higher-level training did not seem to get the attention from Congress that it deserved. The legislative branch's complicated bureaucracy was also a significant impediment to obtaining the necessary funds for training. According to the Board Report, funding for reserves must pass through nineteen separate congressional committees. According to the same study, their funding was not granted in certain years throughout the legislative cycle. As a consequence, they would have to wait until the next year to see whether the reserve would get financing. The next year, the



cycle would begin again. The lack of government focus and the bureaucracy at the legislative level harmed efforts to provide necessary training on reserves significantly.

Another necessary change is Indian citizenship. This reform is only possible via a revision to the Federal Constitution. The Indian is neither a naturalized citizen, a foreigner, or an alien.

Without falling into one of these categories, a person is ineligible for citizenship. Citizenship is a word that everyone understands. Will the Government pursue a legislative and administrative path that transforms them into intelligent, citizen-supporting entities? They are now government wards. Numerous instances of the Government failing to provide the Indians with necessary resources are documented in the 1885 Board Report. Many may agree on the need to enact legislation to guarantee Indian citizenship. If they were citizens, they would be protected by laws against crimes committed by members of the tribes and attacks from beyond the reservations. We are depressing them and impeding their success by our own unfairness against them. They see us as quick to punish but incapable of protecting them. Must we acknowledge the responsibilities that our country bears? Is there justice and law for every man? The Board of Commissioners maintains that Indians should be citizens but confines them on Reservations. This thinking process implies that there is no possibility of Congress passing citizenship legislation. It will not occur for at least two main reasons: (1) Congress has no intention to convert them to citizens, and (2) the federal bureaucracy will assist the Government in defeating this law. There is less friction between the races under the current system, and the United States Government wields complete control. Why would anybody wish to empower a recent adversary? Indians will very certainly



continue to be government wards in the future.

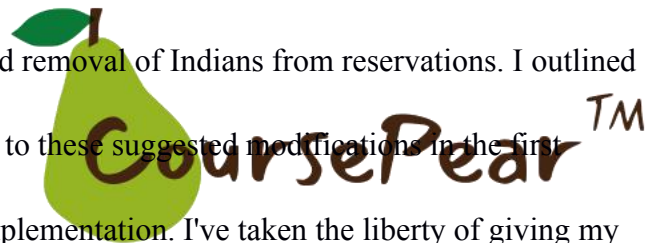
In 1885, the Government's bureaucracy made it simpler to refuse this chance. The bureaucracy will offer many opportunities for this legislation to lapse into inactivity or be buried under a mountain of other legislation that has little chance of passing. The second change I'd like to discuss is the attempt to integrate Native Americans on reservations with indigenous white men. This integration would be an admirable endeavor. This, I think, maybe very beneficial to both races. The agent proposing this initiative said that the Government might compel each participant to get a modest stipend for his efforts to convince him to move to the reserve. This individual would be employed to offer a service to Indians on reservations. Services may be given individually or in groups.

The main reason this reform is unlikely to be accomplished is that I think the United States Government, Commissioners, local agents, Indian leadership, Indians, and white males do not see this change as a priority. This concept was addressed just once in this long report by one agent. This was not addressed in the Commissioner's Annual Report by any Christian missionaries, commissioners, or senior government officials. The agent made no reference to it as a budgeted item. This would entail a substantial financial outlay. To execute a change of this magnitude, all affected parties must agree. With decades of violent warfare between races, displacing them from their land, presenting them with unusable land, and sometimes failing to provide them with necessary food, I cannot imagine either side buying into this notion.

The last change I'd want to discuss is the removal of Indians from their reservations. Is a

reserve the ideal location for the Indian populace? According to others, the emphasis should be on their integration into white society. The Board Report recommends that we dismantle the reserve since its usefulness has passed. While the Government proclaims a desire for civilization, it nevertheless maintains reserves for Indians. Commissioners believe they will be perpetuating demeaning practices and poor moral standards. According to the Commissioners, the reserve serves as a training ground for criminals. We are aware of the probable outcome of this change. This proposal is unlikely to get priority treatment by the Government. Congress is opposed to more conflicts. This will never come to a vote in Congress, in my opinion. Congress is not the only body that will reject this proposal. The President, as Commander--In--Chief, will guarantee that this does not get to the floor for a vote as a new law. The government bureaucracy can undoubtedly assist them in achieving their objective of no change in the law. With Congress and the President opposed to any modifications, I think the Secretary of the Interior would not seek to amend the statute.

I have selected and outlined five possible measures that might be done to improve the lives of Indians at the period, as recommended by the Board of Commissioners: land laws, education and training, citizenship, racial integration, and removal of Indians from reservations. I outlined three potential reactions by the administration to these suggested modifications in the first paragraph that may jeopardize the reforms' implementation. I've taken the liberty of giving my views on the future implementation of each reform. I do have a complaint about the structure of the Board Report. I believe that it would be more successful in making significant changes in a



big, complicated company if the commissioners had prioritized their suggested measures. For instance, prioritize the changes you propose. This would assist people contemplating your actions in concentrating their efforts on the activities you most want.

The Commissioners, the Secretary of the Interior, and their staffs seem to lack a fundamental understanding of how to effect change inside a big institution. For instance, there were instances when the Commissioners concentrated heavily on determining the status of the proposed legislative amendments. The emphasis should have been on the Committees and those state legislatures that had concerns. One must avoid being too critical since the administration had many other difficulties shortly after the Civil War.

