

THE INDIAN AGENT IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1850

[This is the second in a series of articles on the Indian agent, written by Miss Gallaher, the first of which appeared in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS for January, 1916. The two remaining articles will be devoted entirely to the Indian agents in Iowa.—EDITOR]

INDIAN AGENTS FROM 1850 TO 1871

The transfer of the Indian Office to the Department of the Interior in 1849 did not result in any radical change in the administration of Indian affairs. An act approved on February 27, 1851, abolished the old superintendencies east of the Rocky Mountains and established three new ones, the superintendents of which were to receive \$2000 a year. All treaties with the Indians were to be made by officers and agents without extra pay. In place of the twenty-three agents and sub-agents east of the Rocky Mountains and north of Texas and New Mexico, the President might appoint eleven agents, at annual salaries of \$1500, and six agents who were to receive \$1000 a year. Four agents were assigned to New Mexico and one to Utah. The pay of interpreters in California, Utah, Oregon, and New Mexico was increased to \$500 a year and of those in other localities to \$400; while special agents sent to deliver annuities in the older States were to receive four dollars a day and expenses.¹

The change in the authority over Indian affairs occurred just at the time of the addition of territory to the United States as a result of the Mexican War and in the same year that the rush to the gold fields of California began. Indeed,

¹ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. IX, pp. 586, 587.

a new era had begun, both for the United States and for the Indians. Before this time the natives had maintained an almost unbroken, if irregular, line against the advance of the white settlers; henceforth, they were surrounded by settlements — their country being divided and sub-divided by the highways of emigration.

The Indians were collected either by persuasion or by force on the rapidly diminishing reservations, where it was necessary that they should be fed and clothed by the government. The rapidity of this movement was phenomenal and there was a corresponding increase in the number of Indian agents and in the amount of money and goods which they handled. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George W. Manypenny, reported in 1856 that fifty-two treaties had been made with Indian tribes since March 4, 1853, and that the jurisdiction of Indian agents had been extended over an additional area of from four to six thousand square miles. This increase made necessary the creation of thirteen new agencies and nine sub-agencies.²

Some of these districts to which an agent was assigned were of great size. Thomas S. Twiss, Indian agent for the Upper Platte, reported in 1856 that his territory extended approximately from the one hundredth to the one hundred and seventh degree of longitude and from the thirty-ninth to the forty-fourth parallel of latitude. This agency was about three hundred and fifty miles square and contained about 122,500 square miles — an area equal to that of the New England States, New York, and New Jersey combined. Most of the territory, however, was unproductive, except when irrigated, and contained a population of only one person to every twenty-five square miles. The whites consisted of about one hundred traders and employees, and about four hundred troops at the military posts at

² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, p. 20.

the crossing of the North Platte and at Fort Laramie. Agent Twiss, in common with most of the men who were responsible for the care of the Indians, complained of the character of the whites who resided among the tribesmen. In his estimation they were not "the pioneers of civilization or settlements, but emphatically fugitives from both."³ This agency had neither schools, missionaries, nor such industrial assistants as farmers and blacksmiths. From his headquarters at Drips's Trading Post, the agent supervised the wandering bands of Indians, delivered the goods given to them, and attempted to keep them at peace with their neighbors and with the United States government; but there was no means of enforcing his suggestions except by the use of troops. On account of the extent of territory Agent Twiss recommended the establishment of four centers where the Indians might be collected for the distribution of annuities, for trade, and for education. These centers—each of which was to consist of an agency building, a farm, and a trading-post—were to be located as follows: for the Arapahoes and Cheyennes, on Cache la Poudre River, near St. Vrain's fort on the South Fork of the Platte; for the Oglala Sioux, at the fork of Horse and Bear Creeks, forty-five miles southeast of Fort Laramie; for the Brulé Sioux, at the head of White River; and for the Crow and Snake tribes and the upper band of the Minnecoujoux, at the bridge crossing the North Platte, near the mouth of the Sweetwater. He also recommended that Indian traders should be encouraged to farm, believing that their example would be more powerful among their Indian customers than the instructions of the paid farmers.⁴

The vast amount of money required for the operation of

³ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, pp. 88, 94, 96.

⁴ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, pp. 97, 98.

the Indian Department now began to attract the attention of Congress and the country at large. An act of March 3, 1853, made the taking of a receipt for a larger amount than had been paid out an embezzlement;⁵ but conviction was difficult, since the agents were located where they did not come under the direct supervision of the government and among people whose testimony could not be relied upon. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs reported in 1856 that claims for large sums of money had been made against the government on drafts drawn by California agents and sub-agents. These were supposed to have been issued in return for beef and flour, and Congress had already appropriated \$242,036.25 for one lot of these drafts which were all without legal authority. Moreover, there was no satisfactory evidence that the supplies had ever been issued to the Indians.⁶ Senator Crittenden of Kentucky asserted that the appropriation for this department alone, for the year 1857-1858, was equal to the amount required for all the expenses of the government during Washington's administration; while Senator Bell of Tennessee pointed out that the appropriation for that year called for \$700,000 for Indian affairs in Washington and Oregon alone, exclusive of the regular salaries and annuities, and this did not include any of the expenses of military operations. What became of all this money? Senator Houston declared during this same debate that out of \$110,000,000 or \$115,000,000 appropriated for the Indians since 1789, the Indians themselves had never received more than \$20,000,000 worth of advantages.⁷

An attempt was made to prevent dishonesty in the distribution of annuities by providing that the superintendents should perform this duty, since it was argued that the agent

⁵ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. X, p. 239.

⁶ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, p. 20.

⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, pp. 483, 489, 533.

was often alone and there were no witnesses, except the Indians and the traders, none of whom could be relied upon. Senator Houston's answer to this proposition was: "If it is necessary to have a superintendent to guard the conduct of the agent, it is necessary to dismiss that agent, and send a man who requires no guardian to conserve his integrity." He also argued that this plan would not prevent all opportunities for graft; and he explained one common form of cheating the Indians. The agents did not draw the annuity money from the treasury but gave the Indians certificates, which they quickly squandered in trade for only a small part of their value, greatly to the profit of the traders and residents at the agency.⁸

The agent of that time was contrasted rather unfavorably with the agent of former times in a speech by this same Senator. "In former times, when I was a boy", he said, "I recollect the character of the agents whom you sent among the Indians. They were men who stood deservedly high. The man who was then intrusted with the functions of an Indian agent, was an honest man. He was not driven there as a refuge from home; he was not placed in his position by political or family influence; he was placed in it on account of his qualifications for serving the Government with fidelity, and protecting and vindicating the rights of the Indians from imposition." Of the typical agent sent out from the East, with avarice as his chief motive, he said: "He views the Indian as his victim, and the United States as his pursuer."⁹

The ideal agent declared Senator Houston, was a man who was honest, who had had frontier training, and who was

⁸ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, pp. 474, 475, 533, 534.

⁹ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, p. 533.

friendly to the Indians. The difficulty seemed to be that such men were hard to find and even when one could be found, there was likely to be some political favorite anxious to receive the appointment. Men who received their appointment through such influence were often failures in the East; and it became the custom to play practical jokes on new agents of this type because of their ignorance of frontier conditions.

One of the agents at this time fulfilled the requirements of Senator Houston — at least as far as experience among the Indians was concerned. This was Christopher Carson, the "Kit" Carson of western romance. He became agent for the Apaches and Utes under the superintendent of New Mexico in 1854, the year of the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Located at Taos, this unlettered guide of the western explorers and fur traders struggled with his monthly reports and with the various problems of the Indians — the former duty appearing to him much the more formidable. Here he remained at a salary of \$1000 a year until 1861. The residence of the agent was a one-story adobe house with a veranda along the front, and his official quarters were on the south side of the plaza, in "a single room in the row of adobes". But the Indians were so sure of their agent's friendship that they visited the home as well as the office. Part of the time the agency reports were given orally at Santa Fé; part of the time they were written at Carson's dictation by a young soldier, Smith H. Simpson.¹⁰ His reports were short and add nothing to the reports of other agents: they contained a recommendation that the Indians be segregated and taught industries, and comments on the evils of intemperance among the Indians. The incidents related were the commonplace events of agency life — an

¹⁰ Sabin's *Kit Carson Days*, pp. 362, 363, 366, 367, 368.

occasional murder, a horse-stealing raid, and efforts to compel restitution.¹¹

Many of the positions in the Indian service were desirable, both on account of the salaries paid and the opportunities for graft. For example, when the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California was created in 1852, the salary was not to exceed \$4000, while his clerk might receive as much as \$2,500. In 1855 an appropriation of \$12,000 was made for the pay of the three Indian agents there; \$28,850 for incidental expenses, including the traveling expenses of the agents; \$54,300 for the payment of such employees as physicians, smiths, and carpenters; and \$125,000 for the removal of the Indians to three military reservations.¹² Texas, the adopted child of the United States, seems to have received less for the care of the Indian tribes within its borders than most of the other western States. Senator Rusk declared in 1857 that there were no permanent Indian agents in his State (Texas) and that only \$15,000 was appropriated annually for special agents and presents.¹³ Even in the East during the fifties there seems to have been a revival of interest in the Indians, or perhaps it was a desire for more offices to fill. At any rate an act approved on March 3, 1855, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to appoint agents for the Indians in New York, for an agency at Green Bay, and for the Seminoles, fixing their salaries at \$1000 each.¹⁴

One of the rather remarkable features of Indian administration was the comparative safety of these government agents. This was due unquestionably to the knowledge

¹¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1857, pp. 279, 280.

¹² *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. X, pp. 2, 3, 675, 698.

¹³ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, p. 482.

¹⁴ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. X, p. 687.

that any harm to the agent would be followed by swift retribution; but even hostile bands, already under the displeasure of the government, seem not to have tried to harm the agents. Oftentimes these men lived on the reservations without any other white men near them, and their families often accompanied them; yet even in the absence of the agent, his wife and children were unmolested. Occasionally there was an exception to this rule. A Washington agent, who had been sent to investigate a charge of murder, was killed by the tribe to which the murderers belonged, and his body and that of his horse were burned.¹⁵ But as a rule, even when the agent was unpopular and was accused of unnecessary severity to the Indians, as in the case of the Umatilla agent, William H. Barnhart, the Indians did not attempt to obtain revenge by assassination.

The period of the Civil War was marked by general discontent among the Indians, by uprisings against the white settlers, and by hostility between tribes or divisions of tribes. Uncivilized and hostile bands moved restlessly about on the northwestern frontier and threatened to avenge their real or fancied wrongs by massacres of the whites. In spite of this attitude on the part of the Indians and amid the responsibilities of the War, Congress found time to pass new laws concerning Indian affairs. An act of February 13, 1862, emphasized the duty of the agents and officers to seize liquor in the Indian country and provided a penalty of two years imprisonment for anyone found guilty of violating the liquor exclusion law. During the following July another act was passed providing for the division of California into a northern and southern superintendency, the superintendents of which were to receive \$3,000 each. No goods were to be purchased by the department or its agents except upon the written requisition of

¹⁵ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, p. 388.

the superintendents and after public bids such as were required for other supplies. An appropriation in this act included \$18,970.07 to cover the amount due to the Otoes and Missouris, which had been unaccounted for by the late agent, W. W. Dennison. A number of employees were provided for in addition to the agent and interpreter. The Walla Walla agency, for example, was to employ a superintendent of farming, one farmer, two millers, a blacksmith, a wagon and plough maker, a carpenter, a physician, and two teachers. The sum of \$11,200 was granted for their services.¹⁶

An account of conditions on a far western Indian reservation at this time is to be found in Davenport's *Recollections of an Indian Agent*.¹⁷ According to this memoir, the former agent, W. H. Barnhart, had been accused of fraud and of killing an Indian without sufficient reason. Consequently the writer, T. W. Davenport, was sent to take charge as special Indian agent. William H. Rector, the superintendent for Oregon, gave him brief instructions—including a recommendation that, if possible, he appoint as teacher a man named Pinto who had moved to the agency with a large family, having been promised a position by several prominent politicians.

Upon his arrival at the Umatilla agency in northeastern Oregon, Mr. Davenport presented his credentials to the former agent and took possession. He found Mr. Barnhart's brother acting as farmer at a salary of \$1000. One of the employees who appeared on the reports as a teacher at a salary of \$1000 was acting as the agent's secretary, no school having been established. This private secretary

¹⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XII, pp. 339, 524, 529.

¹⁷ Davenport's *Recollections of an Indian Agent* in *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. VIII, pp. 1-41, 95-128, 231-264.

whose name was Matty Davenport remarked on leaving that the position of agent was easily worth \$4000 a year and that he could show the new agent how to make it yield that amount. That this was not an unusual proposition is evident from the statement attributed to Horace Greeley, who was asked how an Indian agent receiving \$1500 a year could save \$40,000 in four years, and replied: "It is above my arithmetic." Accounts at the agency were indefinite. The amounts of such things as grain and medicine could only be estimated, and but one of the five plows supposed to be there could be found. After the new agent had given a receipt for the oxen turned over to him by his predecessor, some white farmers appeared and proved that the oxen belonged to them. They had been collected from the range and presented as government property in the place of the agency oxen which could not be produced. The government farmer, who was agent Barnhart's brother, left when the agency changed hands and his place was given to a man who had been working as a field laborer at \$35 per month. The physician, who might have been retained, refused to stay unless his wife were appointed to the position of "teacher", left vacant by the departure of Matty Davenport, Barnhart's private secretary; and so another field laborer who had had some medical training was made agency physician — much to the dissatisfaction of the Indians. The man Pinto, who had arrived at the reservation some time before with the promises of some politicians, was given the position as teacher, although there was no school.

At this time most of the Indians were absent from the reservation without leave. Their chief wealth consisted in horses — one Cayuse millionaire possessing three thousand head of ponies. This form of property was so satisfactory to the Indians that they resisted all efforts to educate them as farmers.

The agency proper consisted of two log houses, half a dozen log huts, an open shed for machinery, a council house, carpenter's and blacksmiths' shops, and a farm of about one hundred acres, worked largely by white employees. A mill, for which \$40,000 had been paid, had been erected on the Umatilla River several miles distant from the agency. About forty miles away was ~~Fort Walla Walla~~, where a detachment of troops was stationed.

One of the first duties of the new agent was the securing of bids for furnishing goods for the Indians, but the merchants of Portland where he went for this purpose, would not believe that bids would be treated fairly. They declared that the agent always bought the goods where he wanted to, and refused to submit bids. T. W. Davenport, the agent, says of this feature of his duties: "A person coming newly into the office of Indian agent would need no other proof of the general rascality of agents than the Governmental regulations to be observed by them in purchasing supplies. All sorts of lets and hindrances to dishonesty have been adopted, publications, contracts, certificates, vouchers, oaths before judicial officers; but they have been of slight avail in preventing frauds."¹⁸

An interesting side light on the relations between the civil agents and the military officers is also given in this memoir. Two drunken Indians had robbed and wounded a miner, who reported the act to Colonel Steinberger at Fort Walla Walla and this officer sent some soldiers to arrest the culprits. When they could not be found, the soldiers arrested a chief, claiming that he had enabled the accused Indians to escape. He was taken to the fort and sentenced to be hanged on the following Friday; although the justice of such a punishment is not apparent, since the miner was not badly injured,

¹⁸ Davenport's *Recollections of an Indian Agent* in *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. VIII, p. 18.

and the chief was not the one charged with the crime. When the agent, who had been absent, learned what had occurred he drove to the fort and, according to his story, convinced the officer of the chief's innocence and secured his release. The two guilty Indians were later arrested by the agent and sent to the fort where they were hanged — as he claimed — without a trial.¹⁹

Mr. Davenport remained here as agent until 1863, serving less than a year and was succeeded by William H. Barnhart, the former agent. The report made by him in 1865 is accompanied by one signed M. Davenport as teacher, although the report shows that there was neither a suitable building for a school nor any children who would attend. Evidently Agent Barnhart's former private secretary had returned.²⁰ Nearly twenty years later an attempt was made to recover \$115.75 from the bond of Mr. Barnhart, since this amount had remained unaccounted for by him. The Circuit Court of the United States decided on an appeal that the bond, which had been made out for W. H. Barnhart as agent in Washington, did not cover any deficiency in Oregon, although the location of the agency had not been changed.²¹

Other details of the methods of agents and the features of agency life are to be found in the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1865. According to this account it had become the custom for retiring agents to take all the papers and records of the agency away with them. Many of them had also been interested financially in the Indian trade through traders' licenses, which they had the authority to issue. The Commissioner asked that this practice be made a penal offence. The assignment of agents

¹⁹ Davenport's *Recollections of an Indian Agent* in *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. VIII, pp. 24-35.

²⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1865, p. 490.

²¹ *United States vs. Barnhart*, 17 Federal Reporter, 579-582.

was in great confusion, owing to the division of Territories and the formation of new ones. Two of the agents who had been provided for the Territory of Washington were then in Idaho and Montana. One of the agents appointed for Idaho was in Montana in charge of the Flathead Indians, whose agent was paid out of the appropriation for the Washington superintendency. Only three of the agents from New Mexico reported; probably, as the Commissioner explains, because they were unable to read or write English. This report also mentions one of the few instances in which an agent opposed a missionary — at least openly. Agent Davis at Green Bay reported that he had been obliged to order the Catholic priest from the reservation, because he insisted on holding public funerals for his converts who had died of small-pox.²²

A condition similar to that at the Umatilla Agency was reported at the Crow Creek Agency in Dakota Territory by Mr. J. W. Stone. On taking charge he found seventeen wagons, two cows as draft animals, a dilapidated mill, some sawed and unsawed timber, a powder magazine in which the powder had been ruined by moisture, and some beef spoiling in the snow. The office was poorly equipped. A stove and desk were needed and there were neither records nor blanks upon which to keep them. The agency farm had been partly surrounded by a fence — much of which consisted only of posts — and contained one hundred and seventy-five acres of corn and one and a half acres of potatoes. A school was in operation at this agency, with three teachers and two hundred and ninety-seven children. Here again there was friction between the agent and the commander of the military force, stationed near by to enforce the laws. The agents had gradually developed a system of giving passes to Indians who left the reservation, although they had no legal author-

²² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1865, pp. 1, 2, 4, 19, 437, 438.

ity for doing so. Major R. H. Rose of Fort Wadsworth refused to recognize the right of Agent Stone to give the Indians this permission and wrote to him concerning the matter, closing with the words: "any of the Indians from Fort Thompson or Missouri river found east of the James river will be treated as hostile, and *I take no prisoners.*"²³ The officer was basing his claim to the control of these Indians on the understanding that the Indians on the reservation were in charge of the agent; off the reservation, they were subject to military law.

Frequently the agents became the champions of the Indians in opposition to the soldiers. After the fearful Sand Creek massacre of Cheyenne Indians by troops from Fort Lyon under Colonel Chivington in 1864, Samuel G. Colley, the agent, protested against it as unjustified; and the investigation proved that he was right. Yet the agents were usually unwilling to be without military support and wanted troops stationed somewhere near the reservation, although they complained of the licentious conduct of the soldiers. In 1866 the Oregon superintendent wrote concerning the removal of the troops from his territory:

Thus the Coast reservation, on which are four thousand Indians, is without a single soldier to enforce police regulations, preserve order, or punish offences. This is not only unwise, but it is hazardous in the extreme. The agent is powerless to control the Indians, except by moral suasion, and this they oftentimes will not submit to.²⁴

The jealousy between the agents and the army officers had a deeper foundation, however, than the personal differences of the men who happened to be stationed near each other. Many people believed that it was a mistake to trans-

²³ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1865, pp. 219-221.

²⁴ *Report of the Joint Special Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes*, 1867, p. 52; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1866, p. 79.

fer the administration of Indian affairs from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. The chief argument of these people, many of whom were friends of the Indians, was the graft which had become so prevalent. It was not denied that a great deal of dishonesty existed, and it is not strange that it was so. The majority of the minor officials were appointed solely for political reasons and the "Spoils System" was recognized as the code of politicians. Colonel William Bent, an Indian trader, in giving his testimony concerning the Sand Creek massacre explained how the Indians were sometimes robbed of their annuities by the agent. An Indian brought a pony or some other gift to the agent and of course expected a like present in return. The agent gave him annuity goods and kept the pony as his own property. The diplomatic Indian thus got more than his share of the annuity, while somebody else got nothing. Another method by which agents acquired money illegally was by speculating in Indian goods, in partnership with traders who were often relatives. Colonel Bent testified that the son of Samuel G. Colley, the Cheyenne agent, had come out to that country the year after his father was appointed agent, with only about thirty or forty cows and in two or three years had made from \$25,000 to \$30,000. Much of this money, Colonel Bent asserted, was made by selling Indian annuity goods; and the trader declared that one of his men had found the top of a box, marked "U. S. Upper Arkansas Agency", in the younger Colley's lodge. Other agents were accused of allowing traders to sell Indian goods on shares, and then when the time came for distributing the goods, of giving the Indians what was left. The necessary vouchers that the duty had been performed were easily obtained from some of the chiefs.²⁵ The profit

²⁵ *Report of the Joint Special Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes*, 1867, p. 95.

to be made in this way at a remote agency where there was little chance of detection is evident from the amounts appropriated for the various tribes. For example, in 1867 the sum of \$78,700 was appropriated for the Nez Perces alone.²⁶

The advocates of the army also argued that officers could be detailed to act as agents and thus save the amount paid for the salaries of agents, but they did not explain how so many officers could be spared for this duty without adding to the number already commissioned. If the army had so many officers to spare, then it was evident that the administration of military affairs was extravagant. Again, it was asserted, and with a great show of probability, that military commanders were a picked class of men, with high standards of honor and were not likely to be interested in trade. Political influence had little to do with their appointment, and since as a rule they expected to remain in the service permanently, they would not be tempted to risk honor and promotion for the sake of graft. One Senator even argued that the only use the country had for an army at that time was to take care of the Indians; and consequently army officers might as well perform that duty directly. This plan, it was urged, would prevent friction between the agent in charge and the officer responsible for the conduct of affairs when the civil administration failed.²⁷

Moreover, it was claimed that the Indians had more respect for severity than for leniency, and a military officer would not have tolerated the answer given by a Cheyenne chief to a Quaker agent concerning some horses claimed by a white man: "I have no doubt that this stock *did* belong to the young man, but it belongs to *me* now. I took it when I was at war, and I never give back anything I take when I

²⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XIV, pp. 503, 504.

²⁷ Leupp's *The Indian and his Problem*, pp. 105, 106; *Congressional Globe*, 2nd Sess., 35th Congress, Part I, p. 790; Manypenny's *Our Indian Wards*, pp. 342-394.

am at war." Since the position of a military officer was usually permanent, it was believed that the frequent changing of the agents would not be necessary, and the constant succession of greedy officials with pockets to be filled would be prevented. Red Cloud once expressed his idea of the situation in the following words: "I don't see why the Government changes our Agents. When one Agent gets rich at his trade of looking after us and has about all he wants, he may stop his stealing and leave us the property which belongs to us, if he keeps his place."²⁸

On the other hand, the advocates of the employment of civilian agents argued that the purpose of maintaining agents among the Indians was the development of respect for industry and civil law; and a military officer, because of his training and strict adherence to rules, was ill adapted for such work. This view of the question was well expressed by Commissioner E. P. Smith in his report for 1875. "So far, then, as eleven-twelfths of the Indian agencies are concerned," he said, "the question of putting them under the control of the War Department has no more pertinency than that of putting the alms-house and city schools under the metropolitan police. A standing army and an ordinary Indian agency have no common end in view."²⁹ Besides the army did not have enough officers to spare for this work and even if an officer proved to be a successful agent he might be ordered away at any moment. Friends of the civil administration denied that military officers were more successful in handling the Indians than were the agents. In the debate which occurred over this proposed change about 1856, Senator Houston had declared that the army should be subordinate to the civil officers. This argument was supported by an incident related by Agent Twiss in his report

²⁸ Moorehead's *The American Indian*, pp. 317, 318.

²⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, p. 19.

for that year. Two Indians approached a mail carrier to beg for tobacco, as they claimed. He fired upon them and in turn was wounded by an arrow, but escaped. The following morning troops from Fort Kearny attacked the Indians, killing six of them. Later the Indians retaliated by killing some white settlers. In this case the agent maintained that the officer was not justified in his severity and had made the situation worse instead of better.³⁰

The question of improving the moral tone of the Indian service was discussed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in his report for 1868. He admitted that many of the agents were corrupt and that they pocketed the funds appropriated by the government, leaving the Indians to starve, and thus provoking such Indian wars as the Sioux had carried on in Minnesota. The remedy was not, however, a substitution of military authority for civil authority, but a change in the personnel of the agents. To accomplish this, he suggested that Congress should set a date, not later than February 1, 1869, on which the offices of superintendents and agents should be vacated, so that only the worthy ones could be reappointed.³¹ This recommendation was not adopted and it is difficult to see how he expected to eliminate political influence in these special appointments, when it could not be done in the regular routine. Another suggestion frequently made by the men in charge of the office was to increase the salaries of agents. They declared that it was impossible to get men with proper qualifications who were willing to take their families away from civilization and education for \$1500 a year. Either they would not go or they would supplement the salary by dishonest methods.³²

³⁰ *Congressional Globe*, 3rd Sess., 34th Congress, 1856-1857, p. 533; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1856, pp. 99, 100.

³¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, pp. 18, 19.

³² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1873, pp. 9, 10.

So great was the demand for a change of some kind, and so notorious was the mal-administration of Indian agencies, that several bills were introduced providing for the re-transfer of the Indian Office to the War Department, but they failed to pass. The only concession to this demand was the plan adopted at the beginning of Grant's administration of filling the positions of Indian agent — especially among the more distant and hostile tribes — by army officers who were responsible to the Secretary of the Interior for their agency work. During the year 1869-1870 out of seventy agents who reported, forty-nine held commissions in the army. Nine of the fifteen superintendents were likewise military officers, three of the others being Governors of Territories and ex officio Superintendents of Indian Affairs.³³ The remaining positions, especially those in the northern and central superintendencies, which included most of the tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, were filled by nominees of the two divisions of the Society of Friends. Thus the service presented the curious spectacle of representatives of war and exponents of peace serving in the same capacity. This arrangement was supplemented by the agreement that Indians who remained on the reservation were under the protection of the agents, while those who refused to remain in the places assigned to them were subject to military law. It was believed that this solution of the problem would be successful, but it was destined to a short life. By an act of July 15, 1870, Congress prohibited the employment of army officers on the active list in any civil capacity and hence it was necessary for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to determine upon some other plan.³⁴

³³ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1870-1871, Vol. I, pp. 477-480.*

³⁴ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1869-1870, p. 447; United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XVI, p. 319.*

One of the army officers who served as Indian agent at this time has written an account of his experiences during the eighteen months of agency duty. He received notice of his assignment to the Whetstone Creek agency in Dakota Territory in June, 1869, and immediately set out on his long journey. On the way he met General Harney, the noted Indian fighter, who informed him that he did not intend to return to the Indians as he had made too many promises which he could not carry out. He also had an interview with the Governor of the Territory, who was also Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and learned that this officer knew little about the wild Sioux in his district and had never visited the Whetstone Creek agency. Upon his arrival at Whetstone Creek, Captain Poole found the agency located on the west bank of the Missouri River. The site was made up of a series of "benches", the first extending back about eighty rods from the river; while the second, some six or eight feet higher, ran back to the bluffs which encircled the agency on the west. Two small streams, Whetstone Creek and Scalp Creek, had cut channels through the bluffs, but contained running water only after rains. This "pocket of land" contained about two thousand acres of rich soil. On the outer edge of the second bench the new agent found the government buildings. These were all of logs and consisted, as usual, of a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's shop, two store houses, a building used for both office and council room, a dispensary, a barn and stables, and, nearer the river, a saw mill. Back of these were some log huts, including a trader's store, and between these and the bluffs the space was filled in with Indian tepees. The Indians, however, were not limited to this spot for the Sioux reservation extended westward to the Wind River mountains and contained about thirty million acres. The Sioux at this time numbered about twenty-eight thousand people, so that each Indian had about a thousand acres.

The agency was well supplied with all sorts of agricultural implements, but the only men who used them were the government employees and some white men who had married Indian squaws. While their white relatives were engaged in farming the Indians merely looked on. The season had not been favorable, however, for the drought had left the wheat only five or six inches high; the grasshoppers had eaten the corn; and potato bugs had descended upon the potato vines.

Life on the Whetstone reservation was not unlike that at other agencies. Councils with the chiefs were held, rations were distributed, and disputes were settled whenever possible. The rations given to these Indians amounted to about \$30,000 a month, and the leaders were constantly insisting that they were not sufficient. One Sioux brave, dissatisfied with the goods provided him, announced his resentment by shooting into the log house occupied by the agent and another officer who was present to witness the distribution of the goods.

One of the duties which fell to the lot of Agent Poole was the conducting of a party of Indian leaders to Washington. Two chiefs, Spotted Tail and Swift Bear, two warriors, and an interpreter made up the party. The journey, by way of Sioux City, Chicago, and Pittsburg, was made partly by stage and partly by train. Pullman cars, modern hotels, napkins, theaters and other novelties were met with the same outward stolidity. At Washington the agent accompanied his charges on sight-seeing tours, and to theaters, receptions, and official interviews. The guests were feasted on strawberries and ice cream by Mrs. Sherman; they were taken to the gallery of the House of Representatives to watch that body vote an Indian appropriation bill; they were even taken down the Potomac River to visit Mount Vernon, but all this magnificence did not convince them of

the superiority of the white man's manner of living. The only request made of the President was the promise that the agency should be moved back from the Missouri River and when this was granted they were quite ready to return to their own prairies.³⁵

In the meantime an attempt had been made to check the swindling in connection with Indian contracts, by an act approved on April 10, 1869, which authorized the President to appoint a Board of Indian Commissioners to consist of ten citizens, serving without pay. This board was to exercise joint control with the Secretary of the Interior over the disbursements for the Indian Department.³⁶ Under this advisory body at the time of its organization were eleven superintendents and fifty-nine agents. The members of the board began an investigation of conditions in the Indian Office and their opinion of the Indian agent in general was expressed as follows: "The agent, appointed to be their friend and counsellor, business manager, and the almoner of the government bounties, frequently went among them only to enrich himself in the shortest possible time, at the cost of the Indians, and spend the largest available sum of the government money with the least ostensible beneficial result."³⁷

During the general investigation of the agencies which occurred during this attempt at reform, the report of the Washington superintendent concerning two agencies in his district may be taken as illustrative of some of the conditions found. Both of these agencies had been in charge of civilians and were now filled by army officers. Of the Quinaielt agency the superintendent reported that the employees

³⁵ For an account of this agency, see Poole's *Among the Sioux of Dakota*.

³⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVI, p. 40.

³⁷ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* in the *Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 1869-1870, p. 490; *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVI, p. 13.

were honest and industrious, and were not being paid for time spent away from the agency. Accounts were well kept and annuities distributed promptly. In fact the favorable report of the new agent had so attracted the superintendent's attention that he had taken pains to verify the report and had concluded that the former sub-agent, Henry Winsor, was really "*an honest Indian agent*".

On the other hand, conditions on the Dwamish and Tulalip reservations were reported as deplorable. The former sub-agent had been absent for a month when his successor arrived at the agency and never appeared to turn over any money to Captain Hill, the new sub-agent. No property worth mentioning was found, there was no money on hand, and vouchers to the amount of \$14,000 were outstanding. These were statements signed by the agent or sub-agent to the effect that goods to that amount had been sold to the government and were yet unpaid for. No annuities had been distributed since 1865 and although \$30,000 had been donated for benevolent purposes since that year, no evidence of its proper expenditure was on hand. Even the agency oxen had been sold by the sub-agent, and \$2,500 was due to the Indians for labor. In fact, declared the superintendent, no one except the late sub-agent, H. C. Hale, could have conducted affairs so badly.³⁸ A study of some other agencies, however, does not substantiate Colonel Ross's conclusion on this point.

The powers of the Board of Indian Commissioners were further defined by an act passed in 1871, which forbade the payment of more than fifty percent of an account until it had been audited by the Commissioners. In addition to this provision the act included an appropriation for eight superintendents: two east of the Rocky Mountains and one each

³⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1869-1870*, pp. 575, 576.

for Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, California, Arizona, and Montana. A total of sixty-two agents received \$93,600 in salaries. One section of the law settled the question of the independence of the Indian tribes by providing that "no Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an Independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty". Treaties already made, however, were not to be affected by this change. Francis A. Walker, a former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote of this change in the status of the Indian. "Under the traditional policy of the United States," he said, "the Indian agent was a minister resident to a 'domestic dependent nation.' The Act of March 3, 1871, destroys the nationality, and leaves the agent in the anomalous position of finding no authority within the tribe to which he can address himself, yet having in himself no legal authority over the tribe or the members of it." An attempt was made to prevent the connivance of the agents with swindlers by providing that any agent who made or advised the making of a contract with Indians concerning lands or annuities, except in writing and with the approval of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior, should be removed from office, fined \$1000, imprisoned for six months and disqualified from holding any similar position.³⁹

Laws, however, were not sufficient to bring about a reformation in Indian administration: the right kind of men were needed. Conditions during the year 1869-1870 seem to have been unusually good, if the official report may be believed. Commissioner Parker paid the following tribute to the men who served as Indian agents during that year: "Of those belonging to the 'Society of Friends,' I may confident-

³⁹ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVI, pp. 544, 566, 568, 570, 571; Walker's *The Indian Question*, p. 117.

ly say, that their course and policy has been highly promotive of the welfare and happiness of the tribes under their charge. . . . The military gentlemen, also, who last year were detailed for duty as Indian agents by direction of the President, have faithfully, and with much credit to themselves, efficiently managed the trust devolved upon them, and it is to be regretted that they can not be continued in the service."⁴⁰ Since army officers could no longer be employed and the nomination of agents by the Society of Friends had worked well, the men in charge of the Indian department determined to extend this method of selecting agents and to invite other religious denominations to nominate the agents, with the understanding that they should take charge of the religious work in the agencies in which men of their choice were employed as agents.

In accordance with this plan of combining governmental supervision of the Indians with missionary work, the various agencies were assigned to the religious bodies as follows:

CHURCH	NUMBER OF AGENCIES	NUMBER OF INDIANS
Hicksite Friends	6	6,598
Orthodox Friends	10	17,724
Baptists	5	40,800
Presbyterians	9	38,069
Christians	2	8,287
Methodists	14	54,473
Catholics	7	17,856
Reformed Dutch	5	8,118
Congregational	3	14,476
Episcopalian	8	26,929
American Board of Foreign Missions	1	1,496
Unitarians	2	3,800
Lutherans	1	273

⁴⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1870-1871, pp. 473, 474.*

The agency assigned to the Lutheran Church was the Sac and Fox Agency in Iowa. The organizations having more than one agency were usually assigned stations in various parts of the country, although the two sects of Friends were practically in control of the northern and central superintendencies. The Commissioner believed that this method of appointing agents would be superior to the old political system, both in the class of men secured and in the longer tenure of office. Under the old régime, the agents had been changed every few months or at least every two or three years.⁴¹

This system of appointing agents inaugurated what promised to be a new era in the administration of Indian affairs. Would the churches be able to do what the politicians had failed to do? In spite of the optimism of the early reports, the success of the plan was by no means assured. If, as the men in charge insisted, the salaries of the agents were too low to attract able and honest men, where were the churches to find candidates for positions except among the missionaries? The qualities which made successful missionaries were not always those required of an executive officer. And even if the churches succeeded in finding the right men, what guarantee was there that political influence would not reassert itself in filling these positions? It was not likely that office-seekers would immediately surrender the opportunities offered by the Indian service for enriching themselves at the expense of people who were not competent to insist upon their rights. The two decades following the year 1871 show how powerful was this political pressure; and besides there was constant agitation for the reestablishment of military supervision. The plan, moreover, was not one which was based on legislative enactment. It was a device of the administrative officers and as such, depended en-

⁴¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1872, pp. 72, 73, 74.

tirely upon the attitude of the man who happened to be in charge of Indian affairs.

INDIAN AGENTS FROM 1871 TO 1892

The report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1871 shows that six of the superintendencies had been discontinued. Seventy-four agents were on the list, all receiving \$1500 each, except the three in California, who received \$1800. Sub-agents were paid \$1000 a year. In conformity with the law of the previous year, however, no army officers were serving in the Indian Department. Not only were new agencies established for tribes which had hitherto been outside the scope of any agency, but the locations of existing agencies were sometimes changed as the shifting of the Indians went on. The cost of establishing such an agency was considerable. Charles F. Roedel, the agent for the Utes and Apaches, where "Kit" Carson had been stationed, recommended the following appropriations for the new agency at Cimarron:

Agent's house	\$2000	Farmer's house	\$1500
Store house	1000	Blacksmith's house	1500
Physician's house	1800	Grist and saw mill	10,000
Teacher's house and		Stable and corral	1000
school house	2500	Carpenter's shop	500
Miller's house	1500	Blacksmith's shop	400 ⁴²
Carpenter's house	1500		

Additional changes in the system of Indian administration were made by the act of Congress approved on February 14, 1873, which provided for five new officers called inspectors, who were to be appointed by the President, with the consent of the Senate, for a period of four years. Each inspector was to receive a salary of \$3000 a year and expenses, and it was made the duty of these officers to examine the accounts of all agents and superintendents twice a year,

⁴² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1871, pp. 6, 9-11, 398.

so arranging the work that the same inspector did not examine the same agency both times. In order to carry out their work they were given authority to call witnesses and examine them under oath. If conditions warranted they might suspend agents and superintendents. The President was authorized to discontinue any superintendencies or agencies which were considered unnecessary, and four of the eight superintendencies were to be abolished after June 30, 1873. The agent for the Sacs and Foxes in Iowa was to live near or among the Indians and to devote his entire time to their education and training in the mechanic arts.⁴³ The approximate number of Indians under the charge of the seventy-three agents at this time was 150,000. About 95,000 more were occasionally under the influence of the agents, while 55,000 Indians never appeared at any of the government agencies.⁴⁴

During the following year two more superintendencies were discontinued, leaving only the central and northern superintendencies. Agents were to distribute annuities to able-bodied, male Indians between the ages of eighteen and forty-five only in return for work at a reasonable rate, and supplies were to be furnished to the heads of families in proportion to the number of members and for only one week at a time. The agent at Tama, Iowa, was to receive \$500 a year if he resided near enough to care for his charges every day, otherwise he was not to be paid. In an attempt to check the padding of the agency pay-rolls Congress limited the amount which might be used for the salaries of the employees of an agency, exclusive of the agent and interpreter, to \$6000. Agents were required to swear that the employees named in their quarterly reports were actually engaged in work for the Indians for the entire time specified, and that

⁴³ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVII, pp. 438, 463.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1872, pp. 15, 74.

they, themselves, did not receive any of the money paid to these subordinates, and were not interested in any government contract.⁴⁵ An act of March 3, 1875, increased the maximum amount which might be expended for salaries to \$10,000, provided the Secretary of the Interior approved; and Indians were to be employed wherever possible. Agents were required to keep itemized public accounts of their transactions and these records were not to be removed from the offices of the agents under penalty of a fine of from \$500 to \$1000 and disqualification from holding any other position as agent. The requirement that agencies must be inspected twice a year was repealed and the number of inspectors was reduced to three.⁴⁶ In spite of this change, however, the appropriations continued to provide for the salaries and expenses of five inspectors.

The law empowering the President to discontinue superintendencies and agencies which he considered unnecessary, appears to have been applied to the former rather than to the latter. The appropriation for 1876 recognized only one superintendent, the central, while the act of May 27, 1878, provided for none. Thus one grade in the Indian service was eliminated, for the inspectors, although they were supervisors, were really assistants to the Commissioner. The reports and appropriations also show a decrease in the number of agents, but this was not so marked. In 1878 the number of agents provided for was seventy-four; between 1883 and 1887 it was sixty; and by 1892 the number had been reduced to fifty-seven. According to the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Mr. T. J. Morgan, the number of agents and the statistics concerning their agencies in 1890 were as follows:

⁴⁵ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 146, 147, 176, 177.

⁴⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 421, 422, 423, 449, 450, 451.

AGENCY	AREA IN		BOND	AMOUNT OF		SALARY
	SQ. MI.	POPULATION		DISBURSEMENT	ANNUAL	
Black feet, Mont.	2,750	2,173	\$30,000	\$150,000		\$1,800
Cheyenne River, S. Dak	4,481	2,823	20,000	150,000		1,500
Cheyenne & Arapaho, Ok.	6,715	3,372	30,000	200,000		2,200
Colorado River, Arizona	470	840	15,000	20,000		1,500
Colville Agency, Wash.	5,348	2,421	20,000	30,000		1,500
Crow Creek and Lower Brulé, S. Dakota	1,708	2,084	25,000	120,000		1,800
Crow, Mont.	7,364	2,456	25,000	150,000		2,000
Devil's Lake, N. Dak.	432	2,480	15,000	20,000		1,200
Eastern Cherokee, N. C.	102	3,000	2,000	None		800
Flathead, Mont.	2,240	1,784	20,000	20,000		1,500
Fort Berthold, N. Dak.	4,550	1,183	20,000	30,000		1,500
Fort Belknap, Mont.	840	1,722	30,000	115,000		1,000
Fort Hall, Idaho	1,350½	1,493	20,000	30,000		1,500
Fort Peck, Mont.	2,775	1,842	40,000	165,000		2,000
Grand Ronde, Oregon	96	379	15,000	20,000		1,000
Green Bay, Wis.	483	3,164	30,000*	30,000		1,500
Hoopa Valley, Cal.	180	475	Army Officer			
Kiowa, etc., Oklahoma	5,801	4,121	30,000	200,000		2,000
Klamath, Oregon	1,650	835	10,000	30,000		1,100
Lemhi, Idaho	100	443	10,000	20,000		1,000
La Pointe, Wis.	748	4,778	20,000	25,000		2,000
Mescalero, N. Mex.	741	513	20,000	35,000		1,800
Mission Tule River, Cal.	432	4,056	25,000	25,000		1,600
Navajo, N. Mexico	16,741	15,000	20,000	25,000		2,000
Neah Bay, Wash.	36	696	10,000	15,000		1,000
Nevada, Nevada	1,001	973	10,000	20,000		1,500
New York, N. Y.	137	5,112	20,000	25,000		1,000
Nez Percés, Idaho	1,167	1,715	20,000	25,000		1,600
Omaha and Winnebago, Nebr.	124	2,385	25,000	40,000		1,600
Osage and Kaw, Oklahoma	2,453	1,778	125,000	500,000		1,800
Pima, Arizona	775	8,099	10,000	20,000		1,800
Pine Ridge, S. Dak.	4,930	5,701	50,000	300,000		2,200
Ponca, Pawnee, Otoe, and Oakland, Ok.	944	1,843	30,000	100,000		1,500
Pottawattamie and Great Nemaha, Kans.	196	1,016	40,000	75,000		1,000
Pueblo, N. Mex.	1,417	8,285	10,000	10,000		1,800
Puyallup, Wash.	364	2,051	25,000	40,000		1,600
Quapaw, Ind. T.	262	1,225	20,000	50,000		1,500
Round Valley, Cal.	159	582	15,000	10,000		1,500
Rosebud, S. Dak.	5,044	5,345	50,000	400,000		2,200
San Carlos, Ariz.	3,950	4,819	20,000	100,000		2,000
Southern Ute and Jacarilla, Col.	2,360	1,793	25,000	75,000		1,400

AGENCY	AREA IN		AMOUNT OF		
	SQ. MI.	POPULATION	BOND	DISBURSEMENT	SALARY
Sisseton, S. Dak.	1,235	1,509	20,000	25,000	1,500
Standing Rock, N. Dak.	4,176	4,096	50,000	250,000	1,700
Sac and Fox, Ok.	2,329	2,062	25,000	50,000	1,200
Sac and Fox, Iowa	2	399	20,000	20,000	1,000
Santee, Nebraska	2	1,378	20,000	50,000	1,200
Shoshone, Wyo.	3,660	1,658	25,000	75,000	1,500
Siletz, Oregon	351	571	15,000	20,000	1,200
Tongue River, Mont.	580	865	15,000	40,000	1,500
Tulalip, Wash.	27	1,212	10,000	10,000	1,000
Umatilla, Oregon	420	999	15,000	20,000	1,200
Union, Indian. T.	30,914	67,000	50,000	100,000	2,000
Uintah and Ouray, Utah	6,207	1,821	40,000	100,000	1,800
Warm Springs, Oregon	725	923	15,000	30,000	1,000
White Earth, Minn.	3,092	6,403	50,000	75,000	1,600
Western Shoshone, Nev.	488	587	10,000	20,000	1,500
Yakima, Washington	1,250	1,450	30,000	30,000	2,000
Yankton, S. Dakota	672	1,725	20,000	80,000	1,600

*Agent at Green Bay is required to file a special bond in the sum of \$100,000 to cover logging money.

Av.
Salary 1,533.33 1/3⁴⁷

This slight decrease in the number of agents did not mean, however, that the cost of administering Indian affairs was any less. The appropriations for the Indian Office grew steadily larger, being \$5,124,648.80 in 1882, \$6,083,851.37 for the year 1889-1890, and \$7,127,394.69 for the year 1890-1891.⁴⁸ Nor were the salaries of the agents increased to any extent. The increase in expenditures was used for the establishment of more schools; for the salaries of more employees, such as physicians, farmers, and teachers; and for more supplies for the Indians.

The matter of agents' salaries had been frequently discussed. Under the old system the salary was not the most

⁴⁷ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XX, p. 64; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, p. cxix.

⁴⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1884, p. xviii; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, p. cxxiii.

important financial inducement, but when the attempt was made to prevent dishonesty, the agent was forced to rely largely upon his salary and it thus became a matter of complaint. Commissioner Smith in 1876 strongly urged the payment of higher salaries to the men in the more difficult positions. In support of his suggestion he said:

The most important duties in the conduct of our Indian affairs are, and of necessity must be, performed by the agent. Not only are committed to him the conduct of the agency business proper, the erection and care of buildings, the supervision of farming and mechanical operations, the purchase and care of stock, the proper receipt and distribution of supplies, the management of schools, the keeping of accurate and complicated financial accounts, and the furnishing of information and advice as a basis of action by this office, but upon his skill, tact, and ability to influence and control his Indians, success in the administration of Indian affairs wholly depends. . . . A distinguished military officer, after long experience with Indians, states that to successfully manage one of the most important Indian agencies requires as high an order of capacity as to command an army.

The great want of the Indian service has always been thoroughly competent agents. The President has sought to secure proper persons for these important offices by inviting the several religious organizations, through their constituted authorities, to nominate to him men for whose ability, character, and conduct they are willing to vouch. I believe the churches have endeavored to perform this duty faithfully, and to a fair degree have succeeded; but they experience great difficulty in inducing persons possessed of the requisite qualifications to accept these positions when it is considered that these men must take their families far into the wilderness, cut themselves off from civilization with its comforts and attractions, deprive their children of the advantages of education, live lives of anxiety and toil, give bonds for great sums of money, be held responsible in some instances for the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and subject themselves to ever ready suspicion, detraction, and calumny, for a compensation less than that paid to a third-class clerk in Washington, or to a village postmaster, it is not strange that able, upright, thoroughly competent men hesitate, and

decline to accept the position of an Indian agent, or if they accept, resign the position after a short trial.⁴⁹

From the table given above it is evident that the salaries of the agents in 1890 varied somewhat, though not in proportion to the inequalities in work and responsibility. The Commissioners of Indian Affairs had frequently complained of the injustice in the payment of Indian agents. They claimed that the fixed salary of \$1500 which had been paid for so many years to almost all the agents was inadequate and unfair. It was inadequate because men of the proper ability and experience would not serve for it; and it was unfair because the work and responsibilities varied greatly. An agent who had charge of three hundred and twenty-five Indians was paid the same salary as the one who had seven thousand under his care. The system which prevailed in many agencies of appointing some relative or relatives of the agent as employees added to the inequality of remuneration. One agent had his wife appointed matron, although there were no other women at the agency except the cook. Another asked the Commissioner to confirm his appointment of a seventeen-year-old son as farmer at a salary of \$1000, and another son, a year younger, as assistant farmer at \$900. As the Commissioner explained in his report for 1877, it was possible for the agent in charge of the three hundred and twenty-five Indians to have his son employed as a clerk at \$1000 a year, his daughter as teacher at \$600 a year, a brother as farmer at a salary of \$900, and other relatives in other positions; while the man in charge of the seven thousand Indians might have only his own salary. Therefore, the Commissioner recommended the classification of agents into seven groups, receiving from \$2500 to \$1000.⁵⁰

The following year, Congress adopted this suggestion and

⁴⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, pp. iii, iv.

⁵⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1877, pp. 6, 7.

in the appropriation act of 1878 the salaries of the agents varied from \$1000 to \$3000. Two agencies might be consolidated and put in charge of one agent, but his combined salary was not to exceed \$2,200.⁵¹ According to the report of Commissioner Morgan in 1890 the average salary of the agents was only a little above the uniform salary paid earlier. The agents before 1878 had received \$1500; the average salary in 1890 was \$1,533.33 1/3. In addition to the salary the agent received transportation for himself; quarters for himself and family; a team was provided for him; fuel and lights for his office were furnished; he was allowed a clerk and entitled to the services of the agency physician. Supplies for his family must be purchased out of his own funds but could be obtained from the government at cost.⁵²

The organization of the work on the reservations gradually became more and more complicated. Until about 1850 the work of the agent had been comparatively easy. He held his position in accordance with treaty stipulations and whenever the pressure of civilization became too great, he and his charges moved westward. The Indians resented the intrusion of the whites who offered whiskey with one hand and work with the other, but so long as a way of escape remained they could evade both by flight. After 1850 the problem became more acute. The Indians, surrounded by a civilization which they hated and feared, were separated from it by an impenetrable wall of race prejudice and government red tape. Whenever they attempted to escape from the reservation, they were forced back by United States troops and the iron ring about them tightened once more. There, robbed by government representatives, debauched by the men who claimed to be their superiors, made

⁵¹ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XX, pp. 64, 65.

⁵² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, pp. cxix, cxx.

desperate by poverty and a sense of injustice, the Indians became a formidable social problem. Too weak to fight successfully for their rights, they were yet strong enough to resist the efforts of the agents and missionaries to educate them and give them industrial training, which by this time had become absolutely necessary. Gradually the Indians began to submit to the inevitable. As the number of employees at the agencies increased the relative importance of the agent decreased. He was no longer a despot surrounded by dependents who, by common consent if not by court decisions, had no rights which a white man was bound to respect, but a business manager in the midst of a corps of supposedly trained and intelligent subordinates. In case of a vacancy in the office of agent it was possible to intrust his work to one of the subordinates or to special agents, although military officers occasionally served as temporary agents. The work of the inspectors made it possible to secure uniformity of administration even without a regular agent.

Another class of officials connected with the Indian Office was made up of special agents. In 1874 Congress fixed their salaries at \$1500 a year. After 1879 these special agents were appointed regularly by the Secretary of the Interior and their salaries were raised to \$2000. They reported directly to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and might perform the duties of inspectors, or they might be assigned to agency work when special investigations were to be made. While performing the duty of an agent, they were required to furnish the usual bonds. In 1882 Congress provided for an inspector of Indian schools⁵³ who later became the Superintendent of Indian Schools. As the work of the schools

⁵³ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XVIII, p. 147; *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin 30, Part I, p. 22; *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXII, p. 70.

became more and more important, each separate institution came to have a superintendent similar to a city superintendent of schools, and the powers of these men gradually increased until they equalled those of the agent in importance, and they finally absorbed much of his work.

The judicial power of the agent had always been undefined. He could settle disputes between whites and Indians, but there was no civil power to enforce his decisions. Crimes committed by Indians against Indians were not recognized by the Territorial or State courts until Congress by an act of March 3, 1885, made certain crimes, such as murder and theft, subject to trial in the Territorial courts. Minor crimes and disputes were often settled in the Courts of Indian Offenses. These tribunals were composed of three Indians appointed by the agent and were recognized by the Department of the Interior on April 10, 1883. The agents appear to have been well pleased with the workings of these extra-legal courts, since they thus escaped deciding many unpleasant questions. Previous to the organization of these courts, a system of Indian police for the enforcement of law on the reservations had been established in accordance with the act of May 27, 1878. This was a semi-military organization, made up of officers and privates, who were nominated by the agent and appointed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and no body of white officers could have been more loyal or fearless in the performance of their duties.⁵⁴

The number of agents required was slightly diminished by two policies which became popular during the period from 1870 to 1890. One was the system of consolidating the Indians belonging to two reservations, upon one reservation of which a single agent could take charge; the other was the

⁵⁴ Kappler's *Indian Affairs*, Vol. I, p. 32; Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 241, 242, 244; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1885, p. xxi; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, p. 23.

plan for the allotment of lands to the Indians, a measure strongly urged by the friends of the Indians, who believed that the Indian was the equal of the white man if given the same economic and political rights.

The consolidation of agencies was not a new feature of our Indian policy, but it became popular at this time for two reasons. It lessened the number of agents required and it opened a large amount of land to settlement, a measure always approved by the white voters. In 1878 Commissioner E. A. Hayt reported that thirty-six reservations containing 21,922,507 acres of land in charge of twenty agents could be reduced to nine reservations with 4,239,052 acres, for which only nine agents would be required, thus restoring over seventeen million acres to the public domain.⁵⁵

Another measure which tended to reduce the number of agents required was the Dawes Act of February 8, 1887, which provided for the division of reservations among the individuals of the tribe whenever the President decided that it was advisable. The work of allotting the reservations was to be performed by special agents and by the agents in charge of the reservation, and each member of the tribe was to receive an allotment, although there was a variation in the amount of land which different Indians received. The selection of land for orphan children was to be made by the agent. Citizenship was conferred upon the Indians to whom land was assigned, although the allotments were to be held in trust by the United States for twenty-five years,⁵⁶ the advocates of the bill evidently considering that the Indians were more competent to vote on matters of public business than to take care of their own property. This division of

⁵⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1878, pp. iv, v.

⁵⁶ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 34, 35; *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 388-391.

the reservation by no means ended the usefulness of the agent, although the policy looked forward to the time when his duties would cease. His position on such a reservation, before the end of twenty-five years, was peculiar. He was in charge of men who were land-holders, yet paid no taxes, voters, yet subject to the agent or Commissioner in matters of private finance. It was his duty to prevent the sale of liquor to the Indians, although the courts often decided that as citizens they had a right to buy it if they wished to do so. He was supposed to require able-bodied allottees to cultivate their own farms, but the enforcement of this rule on large reservations was difficult.⁵⁷ There yet remained many reservations which were not even partially allotted and on these the functions of the agent remained unchanged.

The more complex the system of administering affairs on the reservations became, the more important it was to secure men of ability as agents. The complaints as to the character of the agents do not always indicate any decrease in efficiency, but rather a higher standard of character. The method of selecting agents adopted in 1870, while it was reported as more satisfactory than the former method, did not entirely solve the problem of securing high grade men at relatively small salaries. There were several reasons for the difficulty of eradicating graft from the Indian Office. Dishonesty was easy and profitable. In addition to the immense sums of money furnished by the government, the agents, as the financial guardians of the tribes, often handled considerable sums of money which came from other sources. For example, J. C. Bridgman, agent at Green Bay, reported in 1876 that the money received for logs during the previous year amounted to \$50,156.74.⁵⁸ The Commissioner of In-

⁵⁷ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 36-40.

⁵⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, p. 147.

dian Affairs, J. Q. Smith, discussed this question in his report for 1876 in which he explained the situation as follows:

In every other department of the public service, the officers of the Government conduct business mainly with civilized and intelligent men. The Indian Office . . . has to deal mainly with an uncivilized and unintelligent people, whose ignorance, superstition, and suspicion materially increase the difficulty both of controlling and assisting them. . . . The agencies are usually located in distant, and, in some cases, almost inaccessible places. They are, in many instances, so far from the accustomed abodes of our people as to be rarely visited by any civilized men except the agent and his employés and persons furnishing supplies. It thus happens that the business of the agency is conducted without the restraints which generally surround public officers. The agent is too remote to be under the immediate and constant surveillance of the central office. He is in a great degree free from the espionage of an intelligent public, and those near him who are competent to detect frauds or criticize official conduct may be influenced by or be in collusion with him.⁵⁹

The power granted to the churches of nominating the agents appears to have fallen into disuse after a few years. Not only were there difficulties inherent in the administration of Indian affairs, but this plan appears also to have given rise to a controversy among the various denominations, and especially between Protestants and Catholics. The latter claimed thirty-eight agencies, but were assigned only eight. Although the individual agent was usually fairly satisfactory, the system appears to have produced the inevitable result of the union of church and government, namely, jealousy. Nor did it entirely eliminate political influence. Although the churches nominated the agents, the making of appointments was still in the hands of the government officials. It was difficult for men who were themselves elected or appointed by political influence to resist the ef-

⁵⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, p. iii.

forts of some prominent leader to have some particular person appointed agent.

A certain Professor C. C. Painter, who read a paper before a conference on Indian welfare in 1886, after criticising the former policy of partisan appointments, declared that the appointments "are exactly in the same hands to-day, and under no greater restrictions than in the most corrupt days of the Indian service, and it would not be difficult to show that they are made for exactly the same reasons to-day, though the same opportunities for plunder do not exist." Just how far from ideal this method of appointment was, in his estimation, may be judged from his statement in the same paper "that the selection of such a man [an agent] should be made alone by a commission of angels specially charged by the Almighty with the duty of extreme vigilance and care." In this opinion the Commissioners doubtless often concurred. In order to lessen the nepotism and corruption existing in many agencies, the appointment of the clerks, farmers, and physicians was entrusted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, instead of to the agent. The agents complained of the injustice of compelling them to work with strange assistants, but their objection was not sustained. The candidates for these positions, with the exception of the physicians, were given an examination and could be removed if found incompetent. While at the agency, however, they were subject to the orders of the agent.⁶⁰

In spite of the various attempts to reform the administration, cases of incompetent or dishonest conduct of agency affairs constantly appeared. In July, 1875, after repeated

⁶⁰ *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners*, 1886, p. 64; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1886, pp. xxx, xxxi; McKenzie's *The Indian in Relation to the White Population of the United States*, pp. 14, 15.

charges of fraud and incompetency had been made against J. J. Saville, the agent at the Red Cloud agency, a commission of four men was appointed by the Board of Indian Commissioners to investigate conditions. The chief accusation was made by Professor O. C. Marsh of Yale University, who had visited the reservation while on a scientific expedition and had become convinced that the rations and annuities issued to the Indians were inferior in quality. The report of the committee was made in the following October and was voluminous and complete, occupying eight hundred and fifty printed pages. The result of these investigations sustained "the allegation of Professor Marsh that the agent is incompetent and unfit for the position which he occupies; that he should be removed without delay, and a competent successor appointed." "His striking deficiencies", continued the report, "are a nervous and irritable temperament, inordinate loquacity, undignified bearing and manners, a want of coolness and collectedness of mind, and of firmness and decision of character. With these defects he combines some very excellent qualities of head and heart. There is no proof, however, to sustain the averment that he was in league with the contractors to defraud the Indians of the food and clothing sent them by the Government. Not a fact has been elicited to sustain this allegation. We see nothing in the evidence to satisfy us that Dr. Saville is either a grasping, covetous, or corrupt man. His tastes are rather literary and scientific, and the love of money seems to form no part of his character. There are two acts referred to in the evidence . . . which exhibit an unpardonable disregard of the moneyed interests of the Government, and which of themselves ought to have caused his immediate removal from office; but, as it does not appear that he was to derive any personal benefit from these transactions, his errors may be explained by that want of firmness, which caused him to

yield to the importunities of the selfish and unprincipled. . . . He may certainly be referred to as an example of at least one Indian agent who goes out of office a poorer man than when he entered it."

After taking the testimony of Professor Marsh and nearly a hundred different persons connected in some way with the agency, the commission made several recommendations, in addition to the one concerning the removal of the agent. Among them were: (1) the exclusion of E. R. Threlkeld from his position as inspector; (2) the refusal to receive bids in the future from three of the contractors concerned in furnishing goods to the Red Cloud agency; (3) a careful enumeration of the Sioux Indians; (4) that bids be received at some point in the West instead of in New York City; (5) that the office of superintendent be abolished and his duties transferred to the inspectors; (6) that army officers be detailed to inspect annuity goods and provisions; (7) that the keeping of accounts be more carefully provided for, and that the salaries of agents be graduated in proportion to the importance of their work; (8) that a commission of army officers be appointed to consider the organization of Indian soldiery for police duty; (9) that suitable persons be appointed in behalf of the Indians to prosecute violators of the law; and (10) that all future legislation be based upon the policy of bringing the Indians under the same law which governed the other inhabitants of the United States. In view of the debate concerning the use of the military department in administering Indian affairs, the answer of one of the witnesses, a contractor, to the question of whether he had any suggestion to offer concerning the management of the agency, is of interest. "The suggestion would be just to turn the whole thing over to the War Department," he replied, "letting the officers issue the rations, and have an officer for agent that will do the Indians justice. The In-

dians themselves wish to have an officer of the Army for agent; I heard them say so a hundred times."⁶¹

Yet all the wrong was not on the side of the agent. The efforts of the government to prevent fraud entailed an immense amount of clerical work upon an officer whose most important work lay outside the office. The quarters provided for the agents were frequently unsuitable, because of the frauds of former incumbents or on account of the difficulty of erecting suitable houses in the wilderness. Their duties—like all work among dependent and defective people—were often discouraging; and the more conscientious the agent was, the more disappointed he was likely to be in the results accomplished. "I am satisfied that no agent can perform the higher duties for which he is placed here", one agent wrote in his letter of resignation, "without sooner or later being compelled to spend his own money to defend himself from some unjust charge. I have the assurance of this same chief of division in the Second Comptroller's Office, that in case an agent acting on his own judgment did, by an expenditure of five dollars, save the Government a million, he would compel him to refund that five dollars if he could."⁶² Moreover, as the Commissioners frequently pointed out, the position of the Indian agent gave an opportunity, not only for plunder, but also for charges of graft which might have no foundation. J. B. Harrison, a representative of the Indian Rights Association, who visited some of the agencies in the North and West in 1886, and who could have had no incentive to misrepresent conditions, offered some comments on this phase of the question. He declared that "moral assassination" was often resorted to in order to secure the removal of an agent or employee, and he

⁶¹ *Report of the Special Commission Appointed to Investigate the Affairs of the Red Cloud Indian Agency, 1875*, pp. iii, vii, xvii, lxxiv, lxxv, and 225.

⁶² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1883*, p. ix.

added that "I have often been told, in towns near Indian reservations, that for ten dollars one could obtain ten affidavits accusing any man or woman of any crime whatever, and I have no reason to doubt the truth of the assertion. . . . After careful observation and study of the psychology of many Indian reservations, especially that of the white people on and near them, I am obliged to conclude that in all cases of charges of wrong-doing or impropriety of any kind against any person in the Indian service, the presumption is in the accused person's favor."⁶³

Herbert Welsh, another representative of the Indian Rights Association who visited the agencies of the Great Sioux Reserve in 1883, had few criticisms on the work of the agents, being especially pleased with conditions at the Pine Ridge Reservation, on which were more than eight thousand Indians, in charge of Dr. V. T. McGillicuddy. Like all agencies it consisted of a group of buildings made up of the agent's office, a store-house, traders' stores, a saw-mill, a stable, the residences of the employees, and a chapel. These were situated in the center of a plain, cut across by the White Clay Creek and surrounded by the low hills of the region. Cleanliness and order were the most pleasing features of this agency, and the Indians were beginning to show the effects of such surroundings. The business ability of this agent, Mr. Welsh declared, had saved the government \$200,000 in the issue of rations, without depriving his wards, the Oglala Sioux, of what they needed. This had been possible because the former agents had distributed surplus supplies, such as flour, bacon, sugar, and coffee — and the Indians had either allowed these goods to spoil or had sold them to the whites for a small part of their value. It was characteristic of the Indians that they would take all that was given them whether they had any use for it or not. Mr.

⁶³ Harrison's *The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations*, pp. 190, 191.

Welsh considered it unfortunate that part of this sum saved from the supplies could not be used in paying the salaries of additional assistants at the agency. Congress had fixed \$10,000 as the maximum sum which could be expended for this purpose. Three years later J. B. Harrison heard rumors that Dr. McGillicuddy had made vast sums of money out of Indian rations, but he declared that the only way an agent could appropriate Indian rations was to eat them.⁶⁴

INDIAN AGENTS SINCE 1892

The administration of Indian affairs since 1892 has centered about the three problems of education, citizenship, and property rights — which are, after all, only the common problems of humanity. What has been the part of the Indian agents in settling these questions so far as they apply to the three hundred thousand Indians? Either because of the character of the men attracted to this work, the system of administration, or the difficulties inherent in the work, the Indian agents seem never to have given satisfaction — even to the politicians. Perhaps the greatest hope for the Indians is to be found in the fact that the people of the United States have been dissatisfied with the treatment of the red men, not only by the official representatives of the government but by the people who gathered on our frontiers. The greatest criticism of the Indian agents in recent years has not been based on dishonesty, though cases of fraud and graft occasionally appear; but the objections have arisen largely because of the partisan appointments which have resulted in frequent changes and in lack of independent action on the part of the agents.

In spite of constant agitation, the office of Indian agent was never added to the list of positions to be filled by civil

⁶⁴ Welsh's *Report of a Visit to the Great Sioux Reserve*, pp. 32-34; Harrison's *The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations*, p. 20.

service examinations. In the case of the other agency employees the merit system was more successful, since these were mere appointive offices and did not require the confirmation of the Senate. On March 30, 1896, President Cleveland, in accordance with the Civil Service Act of January 16, 1883, put a large number of these minor employees on the civil service list, and a later order of May 6, 1896, extended the list to all agency employees, except the agents and day laborers. Indians, however, might be appointed to any of these positions — except those of teacher, superintendent, or physician — without taking the competitive examination.⁶⁵ Even in these positions political influence was doubtless still felt, but it was at least partly eliminated. Not so in the case of the agent, whose office still constituted a senatorial "plum" for some "deserving" friend.

The possible result of such political patronage on the personnel of the Indian service is well illustrated by an incident related by Francis E. Leupp, formerly Commissioner of Indian Affairs. An agent had been appointed upon the recommendation of a certain Senator. The nominee was a man of good standing in his own community, well educated, a member of a church and apparently a good citizen. Some time after his appointment, the Commissioner received an anonymous communication containing a copy of a letter written to this agent by a contractor who was furnishing flour to his reservation. This letter conveyed the information that 40,000 pounds of flour had been shipped to the agency; also that a box of choice cigars for the agent had been shipped by registered mail. Moreover, the contractor suggested that the agent would do him a favor if he would take the samples of flour to be inspected from the sacks tied with green strings. Upon the receipt of this communication an inspection of the agency was

⁶⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1896, p. 3.

made, the sacks of flour opened were found to be those which had been marked as stated in the letter, and the papers of the agent were seized. The reply of the agent to the contractor was found and the evidence against him was so convincing that he made no attempt to clear himself. The Senator, however, was not so easily convinced. He argued that it was improbable that a man of this agent's standing would sell his honor and risk his position for a box of cigars, although, as the Commissioner pointed out, the box might have contained more than cigars. Several weeks dragged along with the suspected agent still in office. At last, the Commissioner announced his intention of dismissing the agent and informed the Senator that his only recourse would be an investigation by the Senate. He also declared his intention, in case this was done, of publishing the documents in his possession, including the letter written by the Senator on behalf of the agent. Needless to say, no investigation was requested.⁶⁶ This incident suggests very forcibly the fact that the strongest guarantee of honesty on the part of public officials, including Indian agents, is not bonds, nor rules, nor itemized accounts, nor inspectors, but publicity and freedom from political intervention.

Since publicity was unusually difficult to secure on the Indian reservations, much reliance had to be placed upon other systems of checks and thus the opportunity for an agent to work out any plan of his own was lost. In the words of an Indian editor, an Indian agent "comes to the Indian done up in a fish net, simply because some agents are not safe without strings all around them."⁶⁷ The keeping of itemized accounts having failed to secure honesty, Congress in 1909 fixed the penalty for making false entries in these accounts at a fine of from \$500 to \$1000 and disqualification

⁶⁶ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 100-103.

⁶⁷ *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, Vol. I, p. 335.

from holding any similar office. Misunderstandings as to whether the official bonds of an agent covered all funds in his charge, whether belonging to the government or not, were settled by an act which made agents responsible on their bonds for all funds they might handle.⁶⁸

This dissatisfaction with civilian agents under the political spoils system led to the old agitation for military control. Since the adoption of the act of 1870 army officers had served only in a few agencies where the hostility of the natives made military rule imperative. Between July, 1876, and May, 1877, four different officers served as agent at the Spotted Tail Agency in Nebraska, during the Sioux War,⁶⁹ but such occasions had been rare. The appropriation act of July 13, 1892, however, attempted to restore military agents by providing that the President should detail army officers as agents wherever possible. The officers, while serving as agents did not give bonds as was required of civilian agents, nor did they receive any additional salary.⁷⁰

This was the last effort to restore the power of the military department in Indian affairs. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs was much opposed to the reinstatement of the military agents, claiming that civilian agents were better fitted for the work, even though the method of their appointment enabled many who were inefficient to secure and hold positions. He also argued that the employment of officers who were subject to the Secretary of War, in positions for which the Secretary of the Interior was responsible, would result in a lack of harmony between the office and field service. In spite of these objections, however, President Cleveland carried out the provisions of the act of Congress

⁶⁸ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXXV, Part I, p. 784; Vol. XXX, p. 595.

⁶⁹ Manypenny's *Our Indian Wards*, p. 377.

⁷⁰ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 120, 121, 613.

and issued the order stationing twenty officers at various agencies. By the close of the year 1893, twenty-seven of the fifty-seven agents were army officers. The regulations of the department also prohibited the appointment of a civilian as agent on a reservation near his home, since it was believed that this would lessen to some extent his temptation to make arrangements in favor of the white people near the reservation at the expense of the Indians. Although the army officers appear to have been conscientious and able in the performance of their duties, the movement in the Indian service proved to be in another direction and the number of officers employed gradually decreased. In 1896 there were forty-two civilians and sixteen military officers serving as agents. Ten years later only one officer was on the list. Indeed, the number of men of all classes who served as Indian agents in the strict use of that term was decreasing, for by 1900 the number reporting was fifty-three, and by 1905 it had fallen to twenty-one.⁷¹

The reason for this falling off in the number of agents is to be found in the increasing importance of the superintendents of the reservation schools. A beginning of this movement had been made in 1892 when Congress included in the appropriation act the provision that the superintendent of the Indian training school at Cherokee, North Carolina, should have the authority of an Indian agent and that the separate position of agent should be discontinued. To compensate the superintendent for the additional work, he was to receive a two hundred dollar increase in salary. He was also required to give bonds like any other agent. This combination of duties was neither unreasonable nor incon-

⁷¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1893, pp. 5, 6; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1896, pp. 614-617; *House Documents*, 2nd Session, 59th Congress, Vol. XV, pp. 484-487.

sistent. The government had constantly increased the amount of money appropriated for the education of the Indians from \$10,000, voted in 1819, to \$4,105,715 in 1908.⁷² As the school plants increased in size and the influence of the superintendents and teachers became more and more a factor in Indian affairs, education came to be recognized as the best policy in managing the Indians and superseded charity and coercion. The allotting of many of the reservations meant the undermining of the agent's authority, while the work of the school superintendent remained as important as before.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs in his report for 1892, after protesting against the plan of substituting military for civilian agents and emphasizing the need of supervision of the Indians even after they received allotments and the franchise, recommended that the school superintendents should be given the authority of agents, especially among the advanced tribes.⁷³ These Indians needed advisers and the officers in charge of the school were unusually well fitted for this phase of the work. The suggestion met with approval and on March 3, 1893, Congress passed a law which provided that the "Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, may devolve the duties of any Indian agency upon the superintendent of the Indian training school located at such agency, whenever in his judgment such superintendent can properly perform the duties of such agency." The superintendents upon whom such duties devolved were to give bonds as other agents.⁷⁴

This change in the plan of agency administration was ap-

⁷² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, pp. 9, 10; *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXVII, p. 122; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1908, p. 52.

⁷³ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, p. 9.

⁷⁴ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXVII, p. 614.

proved by the Indian Office and by the general public, for the number of agencies in which these two positions were combined increased steadily. In 1899 there were sixty-four Indian agencies, presided over by fifty-six regular agents and eight school superintendents. By 1902 twenty-two superintendents were in charge of entire agencies, while others were responsible for groups of Indians in the vicinity of their schools, which had formerly been a part of some agency. This plan of breaking up the agencies into smaller groups with the school as the center was illustrated by the San Jacinto reservation in California. Originally this reservation included several bands of Indians under one agent, but by 1907 it had been divided into five parts, each under a bonded teacher who had the powers of an agent but not the title.⁷⁵

By 1906 there were only twenty-one regular agents, while seventy superintendents were in charge of reservations. Besides these there were three farmers, one industrial teacher, one physician, and one army officer acting as agents. The appropriation act for 1907 provided that the school superintendents acting as agents might be paid as much as three hundred dollars in addition to their usual salaries, which were generally about the same as those of the agents.⁷⁶ By the close of Francis E. Leupp's term as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in 1909, the fusion of the two positions had been completed. The superintendents had either been given the powers of agents, or wherever the Commissioner could certify that they were competent, the

⁷⁵ *Statistics of Indian Tribes, Indian Agencies, and Indian Schools*, 1899, pp. 5, 6, et passim; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1902, p. 20; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1907, pp. 13, 14.

The *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* for 1899 gives sixty-one agencies, fifty-four regular agents and seven school superintendents in charge of agencies.

⁷⁶ *House Documents*, 2nd Session, 59th Congress, Vol. XV, pp. 484-487; *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXXIV, Part I, p. 1020.

agents were appointed superintendents, and when a vacancy occurred the new agent-superintendent was appointed under the civil service rules.⁷⁷

Since that time the terms agent and superintendent have again come to be interchangeable as they had been in earlier times. The official title generally used is "Superintendent and Special Disbursing Agent", but to the Indians and to the public in general they are still "agents", and their duties do not differ very materially from those of the agents before 1892. The emphasis has been placed upon the supervision of the schools and industrial training rather than upon the distribution of rations, but the new superintendents, like the old agents, are guardians of the Indians in theory if not in practice. The trader, the frontiersman, the army officer, the political parasite, the business manager, and the missionary had been tried and found wanting. It remained for the educator to make the attempt and the result is yet undecided.

The advantages of combining the two supervisory offices in an agency may be summed up briefly as follows. It extended the rule of the civil service over the agents, the only important officers on the reservations not already on the list, for regular agents were appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, with the exception of military officers; while school superintendents were appointed by the Commissioner from a list of those persons who had passed the civil service examination. The new plan secured men with more experience among the Indians. In 1902 out of the fifty-seven bonded superintendents, thirty-seven had been in the work continuously for from ten to twenty-four years. As compared with the agents, both civilian and military, who seldom served more than four years and often not that long, this was a distinct advantage, especially in a position

⁷⁷ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 97, 98.

among a people who required peculiar treatment. The Blackfoot agency in Montana, for example, had had four agents in three years.⁷⁸ In the matter of honesty, too, the men appointed as superintendents appear to have been superior to the agents. Commissioner W. A. Jones, writing on this point in 1902, declared that not one superintendent had been removed for speculation, and this statement is supported by the fact that indemnity companies charged forty percent less for the bonds of the superintendents than they did for those of the agents. In the work of the superintendent the change was beneficial in reënforcing his authority over those parents who refused to send their children to school. It also prevented interference in the work of the school by an agent who was not in sympathy with the aims of the superintendent.⁷⁹

The task of educating the Indian children, though slow, is proving successful. In 1901 the average attendance at the Indian schools was 24,077; in 1908 it was 25,964; in 1911 it was 23,647; and in 1914 it was 27,775. These figures are of interest when compared with the total number of children and with the Indian children enrolled in the regular public schools. In 1902, there were ninety-eight Indian children provided for in public schools by the United States government; in 1911 there were 10,625 Indian children in the public schools, and in 1914 there were 25,180. Besides, there are at present about four thousand Indian children in private schools. The total number of Indian children in school in 1914 was 57,898; those eligible but not in school numbered 15,906; while 6,428 children were unable to attend because of

⁷⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1902, Indian Affairs, Part I, p. 19. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1900, Part I, p. 265.*

⁷⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1902, Indian Affairs, Part I, p. 19. Leupp's The Indian and His Problem, pp. 97, 98.*

illness or deformity. The total number in school in 1914 shows a remarkable increase over the number in 1902, namely, 24,120, and 39,397 in 1911, and points to the ultimate elimination of the Indian as a separate class for educational purposes and the passing of the Indian agent. The attendance of Indian children at the public schools is brought about either by the payment of tuition by the United States, or by virtue of decisions of the courts that Indians who are tax-payers are entitled to send their children to school on the same terms as white children.⁸⁰

While these changes in the appointment of agents were taking place, other questions of Indian administration attracted attention. One of these questions had to do with the allotment of the reservations which had been begun on a large scale in 1887. It is of interest in this connection only because of the part of the agents in the work and its effect upon their duties and importance. The actual workings of the Dawes Act showed that there was need of improvement in some of its details. In the first place, it had shown that citizenship and even the franchise were not in themselves sufficient protection for the Indians, but even exposed them to several dangers from which they might otherwise have been protected. Besides, no distinction was made between competent and incompetent Indians. All allottees were made citizens, but none of them could become economically independent before the expiration of the twenty-five year period. The Clapp Amendment, passed as a "rider" to the appropriation bill of 1905,⁸¹ made it possible for adult mixed-blood Indians to sell their allotments without the con-

⁸⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1912, p. 11; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1914, pp. 6, 136.

⁸¹ *Congressional Record*, 3rd Sess., 58th Congress, Vol. XXXIX, Part II, p. 1330.

sent of the Indian Office, although minor and pure-blood Indians could not. This distinction was merely a concession to the greed of the land and lumber companies and speculators, who coveted the farms and pine forests which remained in the possession of the Indians. No procedure for determining who were mixed-bloods was provided, so it was left to be decided by the agent of the reservation or by inspectors in the Indian service.

The result of this exemption when the agent was incompetent or dishonest was extremely injurious to the Indians, as was shown in the case of the Ojibways at the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota during the years from 1905 to 1909. The agent on this reservation at the time of the allotment was Simon Michelet, one of the few political agents at that time. The reservation, on which were valuable pine lands, had already been partly allotted, but on April 24, 1905, the agent began making additional allotments in order to give each member of the tribe the one hundred and sixty acres which the law permitted him to receive. According to the report of Warren K. Moorehead, the special agent sent to investigate this matter in 1909, this allotment was unfair, partly because some Indians were given their full amount of land while others received none, and partly because the mixed-blood Indians, as far as the agent could accomplish it, were given the valuable tracts. Mr. Moorehead reported that Agent Michelet had been on unusually friendly terms with the representatives of the Nichols-Chisolm Lumber Company, and other persons interested in the purchase of the pine timber. Since the mixed-blood Indians could sell their lands and the others could not do so legally, it was to the interest of these men to so arrange that the mixed-blood Indians would draw the choice tracts. The first to receive an allotment was a white girl, Margaret Lynch, who obtained a tract worth \$22,000. Full-

blood Indians were pushed out of line with the consent and upon the order of the agent, or they were told that the tracts they desired had been already drawn, although not a sufficient number of people preceded them in the line to have selected the entire list presented.

The policeman of the agency testified that "Agent Simon Michelet came out of his office in an excited manner, and told me to keep the Indians out and let the mixed-bloods in." Immediately after the drawing, there was a scramble to secure the lands of the mixed-bloods, nor were the speculators particular to ascertain that the Indian who had land to sell was really a mixed-blood. Whiskey was freely sold or given to the Indians and under its influence the Indians made bargains which left them paupers. So determined were the men engaged in this swindle to keep what they had secured that they were ready to resort to violence and when Special Agent Moorehead was asked to bring his affidavits to Washington, he felt it necessary to drive forty-five miles to Ogema, rather than risk the danger of their interference at Park Rapids, the usual railroad station, and even then he was escorted by eight armed men. Inspector E. B. Linnen was then associated with Mr. Moorehead and the investigation was continued. In the case of the adult mixed-bloods nothing could be done since they were politically and economically independent, but wherever it appeared that other Indians had sold land action was begun to recover the property.⁸²

An attempt was made to prevent such conditions on the reservations by the amendment to the Dawes Act known as the Burke Act of May 8, 1906. This law made the granting of the patent in fee instead of the trust patent the occasion for conferring citizenship upon the Indians, although the Indians to whom allotments had already been made re-

⁸² Moorehead's *The American Indian*, pp. 67-76.

mained citizens and voters. Another feature of this law made it possible for any Indian, whom the Secretary of the Interior considered competent, to receive his patent in fee before the expiration of the twenty-five years, without special legislation.⁸³ The agent was thus enabled to retain the guardianship of the Indians until they proved that they were able to take care of themselves.

Another change in the agency system which became important at this time was the elimination of the ration distribution. Ordinarily these consisted of beef, flour, corn, coffee, sugar, beans, bacon, salt, soap, baking-powder, and sometimes rice and hominy. The agents had always been instructed that these rations were not to be given to Indians who were able to work but would not do so when they had an opportunity. Such a rule on many reservations could not be obeyed and became practically of no effect. The granting of rations had sometimes been refused, as a punishment to compel restitution for some crime, or to persuade obstinate Indians to send their children to school; but the natives had come to believe that the whites owed them a living and that work was an imposition to cheat them out of what was lawfully theirs.

The men in charge of the Indian Office thus began to believe that this willingness of the Indians to live on the government rations was really prejudicial to their advancement, even though the government did owe them the money. Agents began to enforce the regulations which excluded certain classes from the ration list. The first attempt to do this on a large scale was made in the Sioux agencies, which in the thirty years previous to 1900 had received supplies valued at \$60,000,000. In 1901 letters were sent to all the Sioux agents directing them to revise the ration lists. The

⁸³ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXXIV, Part I, pp. 182, 183.

names of all Indians who were self-supporting were erased and those who were partially able to support themselves were to be given only what they needed, while those who could work and refused to do so were not to be given anything. All Indians drawing government salaries, except the Indian police who were poorly paid in comparison with their services, were also to be dropped from the list. Among the Sioux agencies the number included in this class was over one hundred and fifty and their salaries ranged from \$840 to \$120 per annum. School employees who received as much as \$300 per year in addition to maintenance were also excluded. The abuse of the ration system is evident from some of these regulations. Later in the year, the same notices were sent to all agencies where rations had been distributed. In January, 1902, the Indians were informed that all who were able-bodied would not be given rations, but would be paid a dollar and a quarter for eight hours work about the agency. Arrangements were also made to secure work for the Indians off the reservations, the agents thus conducting employment bureaus in addition to their other duties. In spite of the opposition of the Indians who preferred rations without work, and their sympathetic friends who considered the regulation cruel, the plan was carried out — the first result being the reduction of the list of those receiving supplies by about 12,000. By 1911 it was estimated that less than 21,000 Indians were recipients of rations and it was hoped that the number would become less as the Indians became self-supporting.⁸⁴

Another time-honored custom of the agency system which disappeared during this recent period was the granting of passes by the agents to Indians who wished to leave the res-

⁸⁴ Harrison's *The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations*, p. 23; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1902, pp. 2-9; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1911, p. 15.

ervation. Until 1904 this was a rule of the Indian Office and it became the cherished desire of the Indians to obtain such a paper, whether they needed it or not. Many of the Indians were harmless but lazy and shiftless, and an agent, although he had no reason for refusing a pass, did not hesitate to write very plainly concerning the bearer of the pass, who, of course, could not read it himself. The following illustration of this practice is cited by Francis E. Leupp:

NOTICE

Lazy Jake, to whom this paper has been issued, is a thoroughly worthless and unreliable Ballyhoo Indian.

R. VAN WINKLE,
*U. S. Indian Agent.*⁸⁵

The Indian went away satisfied and of course imposed on no one to whom he proudly displayed this testimonial. The pass system was gradually abolished and consequently this duty of the agents was discontinued.

Another reform which touched the work of the agents was the ruling of December 17, 1909, concerning the collection of debts from Indians, by which agents were forbidden to assist creditors in collecting from Indian debtors. Previous to this time — although it had been prohibited as early as 1880 — creditors had presented their bills to the superintendents in charge of the reservations. To avoid complaints, all debts incurred before 1909 were investigated by the Indian Office and it was found in many cases that not more than fifty percent of the amounts claimed had been received by the Indians.⁸⁶

But all these changes in the administration of Indian affairs have apparently left the work of the agent or superintendent as complex as it was before. An agent in the

⁸⁵ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 221-223.

⁸⁶ *Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1912, pp. 10, 11.

Southwest during the first decade of the twentieth century has been described as a man who "sat in a swivel chair, for four consecutive years, practically every day from eight in the morning till five in the evening, hearing complaints, issuing orders, writing letters, opening bids, signing leases, supervising accounts, drawing checks, settling domestic disputes, exercising the functions of a guardian for orphan children, unravelling the intricacies of heirship in families where nobody knows certainly his blood relationship to anybody else, adjusting debts and credits between individual Indians, preparing cases for the prosecution of dram sellers or the ejection of intruders, and devising forms for legal instruments which will save some remnant for the Indian after the white man gets through stripping him. In all these four years he has had less than twenty days' vacation. His immediate recreations have been an occasional visit to an outlying pay-station; an appearance in court as a witness against some one who is trying to rob the poor people in his care; or a personal inspection of an Indian's property at a distance, when a white contractor or a railroad company wants to make a doubtful use of it."⁸⁷ Nor were these duties performed without active opposition from the whites who surrounded the reservation. Colonel Day, the agent for the Southern Utes, defended the Indians against the attempts of the people of Colorado to move them to Utah, and was threatened by the white settlers with injuries and indignities, including the boycott of the newspaper of which he was the editor, and such treatment as would make it impossible for his family to remain in Durango, Colorado.⁸⁸

A description of the work of an Indian superintendent practically similar to that above, was given in 1914 by Denison Wheelock, an Oneida Indian, although the greater

⁸⁷ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, p. 104.

⁸⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1895, p. 1002.

emphasis upon educational work is apparent. The following are the words of this man who is fairminded enough to see the good which the United States has attempted as well as the evil which it is unable or unwilling to prevent:

An agent on an Indian reservation is charged with the care and control of every Indian residing on his particular reservation; if an Indian desires to sell his land, the agent secures a buyer and arranges the sale for him; if an Indian wants to buy a cow, the agent finds the cow and arranges for its purchase; if an Indian determines on farming his allotment, the agent furnishes the implements, the seed and the instruction for him; if he wants to send his children to school, the agent arranges for their transportation and physical examination, and for the maintenance, care, discipline, clothing, board, lodging and general comfort of such children while at school. The office of the agent is the probate court for the settlement and distribution of the estates of deceased Indians. He is the policeman and judge of the criminal court. He is responsible for all the property belonging to the government; for the efficiency and competency of all the employees under him; for the education and civilization of the thousands of Indians under his charge and for the wise and economical expenditure of funds appropriated by the government for use on his reservation.

Mr. Wheelock also regretted the lack of authority and initiative on the part of these officers and the possibility of interference by some clerk at Washington who could not understand the situation. He further declared that the average salary of \$2000 a year would never attract the class of men needed in the work. The trouble, in his estimation, was with the system, at least as much as with the men who did the work. This opinion is summed up in the statement that such "a system cannot be expected to accomplish very much of benefit and never has."⁸⁹

Another Indian, in an editorial on the subject of Indian agents declared that men accepted these positions for one of

⁸⁹ *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, Vol. I, pp. 366-368.

four reasons. Some needed a "job", some were dishonest and hoped to make money out of their dealings with the "dirty redskins", some thought the place an easy one, while others really hoped to succeed in a work in which others had failed. The editor had no illusions about the difficulty of the work of the agent, for he asserted that "Joe Pete, our Kickapoo friend, said there are things he would not do 'even for four banks full of money.' This is one I wouldn't."⁹⁰ It must have been to the third class that the agent belonged concerning whom Mr. Leupp tells the following story. He had just appointed a new superintendent and on visiting the reservation, found that the Indians were making unreasonable demands on his time. He remonstrated with them, concluding with the remark, "Now, I want you to remember that an Agent, like every body else, must have some time to rest!" In the pause which followed, an old Indian called out, "The *last* Agent rested *all* the time!"⁹¹

The present system of administering Indian reservations is characterized by the encouragement given the Indians to leave the reservations and become an integral part of the citizenship of the State. It is also marked by the tendency to increase the number of reservations, since by this means the work of a superintendent is made more personal and effective. According to the Commissioner's report in 1912, there were 157 superintendents with an average salary of about \$1,691; 719 employees engaged in general administration; 2401 persons giving instruction of various kinds; 766 police; 311 persons engaged in the department of health; 140 in forestry; and 525 unclassified — a total of 5019 employees in the Indian service.⁹²

⁹⁰ *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, Vol. I, pp. 334, 335.

⁹¹ Leupp's *The Indian and His Problem*, pp. 4, 5.

⁹² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1912, p. 305.

SUMMARY

From the preceding sketch of the administration of Indian affairs, it is evident that the history of the work of the Indian agents in the United States may be divided, more or less arbitrarily, into six periods. Each period has been characterized by some peculiar purpose or plan of administration; and yet in spite of these differences, the continuity of the work has been unbroken. Sometimes the agencies have been maintained for the benefit of the white men, sometimes they have been largely concerned with the welfare of the Indians. Occasionally they appear to have existed largely for the purpose of satisfying political debtors.

The first period covers the colonial history of the English settlements. With reference to Indian affairs, this period was marked by the emphasis on the commercial and military work of the representatives of the governments, and by the lack of agreement among the various provincial and Crown agents. Each colony wanted the trade of the Indians and sometimes their military support, and each was willing to make some concessions to obtain what it wanted. The Indian agents at this time were diplomatic representatives, commercial travellers, and military officers by turns. Although an effort was made to convince the Indians that these men were sent out for the benefit of the natives, their fundamental purpose was the strengthening of the particular government they represented.

The second period covered the Revolutionary War and the years under the Articles of Confederation. It is characterized by the emphasis upon the diplomatic work of the agents. Trade, land purchases, and education among the Indians were made subordinate to the struggle for independence. The system was as chaotic as its purpose was patriotic. The early period had been one of formation, the second was one of readjustment. So far as Indian administration was con-

cerned the government simply marked time. The Indians were useful friends but dangerous enemies, and the agents were instructed to make every effort to win their friendship.

When the new Constitution was inaugurated in 1789 a more definite policy of administering Indian affairs became possible. This third period, which ended in 1849 was marked by the extension of white settlements westward and the constant removal of the Indians to new hunting-grounds. It became the chief duty of the agents to hold back the advancing pioneers, and at the same time to urge the Indians forward. The Indian asked but one thing of the white man — that he be let alone. The white man, likewise, wanted but one thing of the Indian — his land. The one thing an agent was expected to accomplish was the transplanting of the Indians. The pioneer cared not at all where the Indian went, his only demand was that he be removed from the land which the settler coveted.

After 1849 two changes took place in the conduct of Indian affairs. The supervision of the work was transferred from the War Department to the Secretary of the Interior, and a policy of consolidation and segregation took the place of simple removal. The agents were appointed theoretically to carry out the plans of the government and to distribute the supplies and money which had been promised to the Indians in return for their lands. As a matter of fact, much of the money appropriated for the relief of the Indians went into the pockets of political spoilsmen.

Then came a period of attempted reform. During the years between 1870 and 1892 an effort was made to substitute religious control for political influence and also to establish political and economic independence in the place of paternalism. The chief purpose was the reformation of the Indian service and the incorporation of the Indians into the body politic. The government agents were to be spiritual

and educational leaders of the Indians. A great deal was accomplished, but all efforts proved ineffective to protect the Indians from the greed of their white neighbors.

To supplement these movements, the United States government began to emphasize education in order to give the Indians intellectual independence, without which economic and political rights have been as useless to them as houses built on sand. Beginning with 1892 the government began the correlation of the schools and the agencies. The agents had always been expected to teach the Indians some of the lessons of civilization, but now the teachers were to be the agents. The purpose was no longer to be the separation of the Indians from the whites, but the preparation of the Indians for taking their places in the state along with the white men.

Throughout these periods, the agents have lived and worked among the Indians as more or less faithful exponents of the motives which sent them there. Persuasion, bribery, intimidation, whiskey, robbery, charity, coercion, reason, the franchise, property rights, and education have been used by turns to accomplish the varying purposes of the white men. The government is still spending nearly \$10,000,000 a year through the Indian Office and the amount is increasing. Has the work of the Indian agents then been an entire failure? Success must be judged by the obstacles overcome as well as by the results accomplished. The difficulties in this work have been many. The agent, even when honest, has been handicapped by red tape and political intrigues above him, by native indolence and superstition below him, and by greed and contempt for the Indians in the whites around him. The results may be seen in the lists of prominent Indian citizens, in more than \$900,000,000 worth of property held by native Americans, in 180,000 Indian land-holders and almost 60,000 Indian children in various

schools.⁹³ How far from successful the work has been may be read in the broken treaties, the massacres, the graft, and the other features which have made the history of our relations with the Indians so frequently a disgrace to the civilization we profess. The work is incomplete, but not entirely a failure. In the words of an Indian editor, "Lo, the poor Indian agent! Who shall lighten his burden, who shall make his name honorable, and who shall give him understanding and clear the way that he may work honestly, intelligently and to good purpose whether he wills it or not?"⁹⁴

RUTH A. GALLAHER

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA CITY IOWA

⁹³ Moorehead's *The American Indian*, pp. 26, 27.

⁹⁴ *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, Vol. I, p. 337.