

# A Word With You

WHILE the whole country is exercised over the Negro problem, we might ponder another minority problem in our midst—that of the American Indian. Though they are less in the foreground and fewer in numbers (there are something over half a million Indians throughout the U.S.), a little problem can still be a nagging one—like a speck in the eye.

Our encounter with the Indian was just the opposite of the Negro situation. Negroes were forcibly wrenched from their native habitat and implanted on the land here. The Indians were already here and they were driven off their land.

As we know, the Indians thought of land as common property. The white settlers enclosed open land when they came, and this took the Indians aback, but they still tolerated it as the strange custom of the pale-face. The trouble came when the unlimited greed of the white man for land caused him to keep enclosing much more than he could use.

As the settlers fanned out across the country, Indians were brushed aside, annihilated—or, at best, offered treaties which were broken as fast as they were made.

One classic piece of treachery was the handling of the Seminole Indians. Shortly after having been "given" fairly good farming land, they were evicted, the lands swiped, and they

fled to the swamps to wage battle against the U.S. almost to the present.

Finally the remnants of the Indians were put on reservations consisting of lands that were so poor they weren't worth enclosing. And yet, even today, when these lands are found to be of some value, every means is sought to get the Indians out of the way.

Meanwhile, having let them live on land too poor to live on, our government does everything else possible for them—medical care, education, welfare. As Tolstoy said, "The rich will do everything for the poor except get off their backs."

In Alaska, the Eskimo's traditional way of life has been disrupted and he has not been assimilated into the white man's way of life. He does have one souvenir of our civilization—slums. Eskimos are now demanding decent land to live and work on. Comprising one-fourth of Alaska's population, they want one-fourth of the land. Imagine the nerve!

On the other hand, maybe it's not such a bad idea. Let the Indian tribes have land that is good enough for them to be self-supporting without handouts (which they dislike). Standing on their own feet, they will learn the arts of civilization fast enough—and since they practice common property in land, the chances are they will progress ahead of us in short order.

— Robert Clancy

Vol. 29, No. 10

October, 1966

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for the community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$1 a year; single copies 10c. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

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