

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

Advs 3rd Fla Supt.
State Camp, Jacksonville, Fla.
July 7, 1916



To the Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Dept. Interior

My dear Mr. Commissioner:

In reply to Office Letter, Land-allotments
65564-1916. W.O.M. I submit the following
report.

1. Owing to the fact that I am at present
serving in a military capacity it is impossible
for me to refer to data in my office but
I remember the incident of which Mrs J.M.
Willson speaks.

The legislature of 1899 (as I understand it)
faced a condition where a considerable
number of persons were clamoring for
a land provision for the Florida Seminoles
which the members of the Legislature were
opposed to granting. Finally a "joker
bill" was introduced setting aside all
lands owned by the State, except school
sections, in 36 Townships. The truth

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of the matter was that the State did not own an acre of land in any of the 36 townships except the school sections. This stopped public clamor as those interested thought something had been done for the Indians.

In my first report (Apr 1913) I make mention of this grant but state that I find that title is held by private parties.

Afterward in conversation with a member of the 1899 Legislature I was given the above facts and so far as I have been able to examine titles they have been proven true.

I fail to see where Mr Duncan's report would have bearing on a State proposition. Unquestionably it was a mistake for the Govt. to cede all lands to the State before making provision for the Indians, but when it had done so the ownership of the lands rested with the State and not with the U.S. Govt.

When Mr. Criel came to Fla. he corrected the error as far as possible by securing all Govt lands in the Indian Country making a total of some 3000 in addition to the land.

which had been purchased in Lee Co..

My best arguments have been constantly advanced, since becoming Special Commr, for the State to set aside suitable lands for the Florida Indians in the future and, while no action has been taken as yet, it is certain to bear fruit soon. Sentiment is growing every day. The only thing is to show the need instead of criticizing past legislation..

2.

So far as truck growing - cattle raising etc. is concerned, the Indian has equal rights with the whites.. Reference to my 1916 Statistical Report will show to what extent they have availed themselves of it..

The Condition of the Florida Indians was never as good as today.. They are making reports to me here in Camp, written by themselves showing that the Big Cypress Band cleared \$800.00 last month furnishing cross ties while the Okechokee Band are averaging \$1,250 per week building a County road.. Everything is working smoothly and I am still keeping in close touch with the Indians who seem deeply interested in the

11.
fact that the govt is using me in
what they term "the big war.."

Resp submitted

Lucien A. Spencer
Sp't. Commr etc.

Address

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