

MIAMI, FLA., *March 13, 1917.*

The committee met at 9 o'clock a. m.; Hon. Charles D. Carter (chairman) presiding. There were also present Congressmen Hayden, Sears, Tillman, Gandy, Hastings, Norton, and Ellsworth.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Mr. Girtman, give your name, address, and business.

**STATEMENT OF MR. J. D. GIRTMAN, OF MIAMI, FLA.**

Mr. GIRTMAN. My residence is Miami, Fla. As for business, I practically have none, now. I am just out of business. I was in the grocery business, hides, and furs for some years.

Mr. SEARS. Mr. Girtman, how long have you lived in Florida?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Thirty-three years.

Mr. SEARS. Where did you originally come from?

Mr. GIRTMAN. South Georgia.

Mr. SEARS. How long have you been acquainted with the Seminoles of Florida?

Mr. GIRTMAN. About 20 years.

Mr. SEARS. Have you been intimately associated with them in a business way?

Mr. GIRTMAN. For about 18 years.

Mr. SEARS. Explain to the committee what your business transactions consisted of.

Mr. GIRTMAN. I was in a grocery store, and in the fertilizer, grain, and hay business, and buying hides and furs.

Mr. SEARS. Would these Indians sell you their hides and furs?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I practically bought the whole east coast.

Mr. SEARS. Did you find those Indians capable of taking care of themselves and keeping up with the prices of furs?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir. They were better conversant with the prices of fur than anyone else, because they had wireless telegraphy long before we discovered it.

Mr. SEARS. In other words, the information would travel?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They had a wireless telegraph. They did it with smoke.

Mr. SEARS. Is it or is it not a fact that because of your acquaintance with the Indians, and by your fair dealings with them, that you have gained their confidence?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes.

Mr. SEARS. Will not the Seminole Indian, after a white man has gained his confidence, listen to that white man?

Mr. GIRTMAN. If he understands how to get their attention.

Mr. SEARS. Have you ever had any trouble in making them do what you wanted them to do?

Mr. GIRTMAN. It is trouble to get them to do anything that you want them to do.

Mr. SEARS. What class of people are the Seminoles, explaining that answer?

Mr. GIRTMAN. In what way?

Mr. SEARS. Are they independent?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They are more independent than the eagle that sits on the American dollar. You can't conceive their independence. I just know of a case that happened a few days ago when we commented—it was told to me second handed—that this commissioner here was paying the doctor bills, and this boy's father, which is the old type of Indian and has that old idea of independence, wouldn't allow them to pay his \$40 doctor bill, when they asked him and told him that all he had to do was to let them pay it, and he refused to let them pay it. He was that independent. Now, he would have laid out there and starved to death before he would have asked, especially the Government, for one crust of bread.

Mr. SEARS. Is that feeling because they feel the Government has not treated them fairly?

Mr. GIRTMAN. The Government has not treated them in past years fairly, and they are naturally superstitious of a Government official. That is the older bunch. The younger bunch of this age, from, we'll say, I reckon 30 years down, are more easy on the Government officials and the white people than the old fellows are.

Mr. SEARS. Is this country rapidly being settled up?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Dade County?

Mr. SEARS. I mean practically the entire State.

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; very rapidly.

Mr. SEARS. Have you seen the Indians for the last 20 years in their natural habitat?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They have been driven from place to place all along this coast.

Mr. SEARS. They are gradually being forced back?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Gradually being forced back.

Mr. SEARS. If that continues for the next 10 years and the Government does not provide for them, where will they go?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They will gradually, in their independence, starve to death right in those Everglades.

Mr. SEARS. What is your idea that the Government should do with them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. My idea is that the Government should put their lands—survey them and stake them out—so that they will know which is their land, and try and induce them to farm by furnishing them seeds, farming implements, and different things, to help them out by a competent man to help them out to have confidence in him. And he doesn't need any office in the Federal building, and he doesn't need any red tape tied to his coat tails so he couldn't do anything.

Mr. SEARS. He ought to be out among the Indians?

Mr. GIRTMAN. He ought to be with the Indians.

Mr. SEARS. Do you or do you not believe that if the Indians could be made to believe that that was his land, at or near where he is used to living, that he would go on that land and make him a home?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't think there would be much success for several years—possibly 5, maybe 10.

Mr. SEARS. With the younger class?

Mr. GIRTMAN. As the older class die off the younger class will take to it more readily.

Mr. SEARS. Will or will not the people of Florida, without expense to the Government, cooperate with the Government in trying to get these Indians to go on this land? Take yourself, for instance.

Mr. GIRTMAN. The people of Florida that have been associated and have dealt with the Indians will all contribute to the cause. I don't believe there's a man that wouldn't.

Mr. SEARS. Have the Indians ever given us any trouble since the Indian War, practically?

Mr. GIRTMAN. There has never been any trouble excepting once or twice, and it was practically the cause of the white man then. This boy—I kept him out of Miami for 12 months, sitting right here, on account of a little trouble they had up here at the time they used to buy booze at any of the booze shops in Miami, and he, with three other Indians, was intoxicated, and there came along in a boat some white boys who made fun of them, and this boy in his intoxicated condition takes his rifle and shoots at them. The ball struck the water and the ball split in two or three pieces and one piece struck one of the men in the stomach, right here, but didn't go through—just burnt the skin and stuck there. The other Indians immediately run to him and took the gun away; and the sheriff got after it and came to me, so I hired an old trapper by the name of Morris—Capt. Morris—the next day and went and got me a canoe and went into the Everglades to straighten this affair up. He came to me and asked me what to do, and I told him that these boys were very mad and that they might do the boy harm if they saw him, and that the boy did it ignorantly and with no bad intention; just to let the boy stay out of Miami for 12 months, or about that; that I would let him know when he could go back safely. So I worked around and found they didn't know the names of any of them; no one knew who did it, and I told Charlie—he came in to find out whether he could come back to Miami—I told him to come on. So he has been coming back, and spends as high as four months here.

Mr. SEARS. Has he ever been in any trouble since?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No. This is the boy right here [indicating].

Mr. SEARS. They will listen to the white man if the white man can get their confidence?

Mr. GIRTMAN. If the white man has their confidence. And the only way to get their confidence is to be honest with them. In selling them goods, for instance, they will come in and buy \$2 worth of sugar and only get \$1 worth. That has happened several times. The clerks in putting up this order would leave \$1 out accidentally. The Indian goes home and is gone six months, comes back and comes to me and says, "Jimmy Girtman, me buy \$2 worth sugar last time. One dollar me get. You steal um ojus"—that means "lots." The idea is, there is no cheating, there is no swindling, but it is downright stealing with the Indian when you take anything that belongs to him. I would immediately give them that dollar's worth of sugar. I would question them a little about it and give them that dollar's worth of sugar, and there is where I gained their confidence, by being always honest with them; and if they should go away and I should find out a week afterwards or before they came

again that some other Indian accidentally got that dollar's worth of sugar instead of the man that it belonged to, when the Indian came back the next time I would take it up with him and show him and tell him which Indian got it, and as soon as I made him sensible of it he would reach his hand in his pocket and give me the dollar; or if he didn't have the money he would tell me, "Make book"—that is, to charge him with that dollar. I think I have upward of \$2,000 that is from two to five years past due on my accounts now. I have an Indian ledger. I have always kept their accounts separate. The cause of this is the European war, which put the alligator hides—

The CHAIRMAN (interposing). Because of what?

Mr. GIRTMAN. The cause of owing me these accounts is the European war. As long as the Indian was prosperous and had money he could pay his accounts and was honest, but when he has no money and the stuff he is getting brings no money he can not be honest.

Mr. SEARS. And this war practically stopped the sale of furs?

Mr. GIRTMAN. It practically stopped the sale of furs and alligator hides. It acted on them as it did with cowhides; it just cut them about two-thirds off in price, and some of them more than that. There was a style of alligator hide that we call the "round hide," which split in the belly from here down [indicating]; took off claws, head, and feet on everything under 4 feet. That 4-foot hide was worth from \$0.75 to \$1 wholesale—that is, to the Indians. It sold from \$0.75 to \$1.25 wholesale. That same hide to-day will only sell in a belly hide, taking off—leaving the head, simply strip them here on the side and take this part off [indicating]—at 10 cents apiece.

The CHAIRMAN. What did the hides sell for in the same way before—the same kind of hide before?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They seldom ever took them, only in round hides. The price was such that they only took the round hide. Then when the belly hide—before the round hide came in it sold for \$0.30 to \$0.40 apiece—the belly hide. It cost an average of 5 cents to buy the salt to put on that hide. I don't know how much it would take for a 4-foot or 7-foot, but the average was about 5 cents all round. For the 7-foot hide I paid from \$1 to \$1.25, which was always the belly hide or flat hide. That hide to-day will only bring from 50 to 60 cents in New York.

The CHAIRMAN. What does the Indian get for it?

Mr. GIRTMAN. The Indian was getting from 40 to 60 cents for it. A great many of the merchants are paying the actual New York price for those hides and standing the freight on them.

The CHAIRMAN. How can they do that?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They manage to do that by selling them groceries in return, and, understanding the situation of the Indian, they do that to help them out. I know that the man that I sold out to has shown me his returns for his hides where he practically loses the freight on the hides. I think it would amount to about 6 or 7 per cent, may be, of the cost of the hide.

Mr. SEARS. Then you believe that something in the shape of a reservation or something should be done for the Seminole Indians?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; my opinion is that that land that is allotted to them should be staked out, and it should be so that they will know

where their land is, and if one of them wants to get on there and make himself an orange grove or a farm and build permanent houses that no white man can ever come and survey around him and tell him to move.

Mr. HASTINGS. Has any Seminole Indian ever built a house?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. About how many of them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't know. How many houses are there, Willie (addressing Mr. Willie Willie)?

Mr. WILLY WILLY. Charlie Tiger—he has a big house, big store.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is one of them a merchant—Tiger?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Where is his store?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Way over in the Big Cypress, about 75 miles from here, on the edge of the Big Cypress Swamp.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do a good many Indians live in that vicinity?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, as a rule, do they have houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No.

Mr. HASTINGS. Then there are very few houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Very few houses, and those are over near the Big Cypress, on those islands.

Mr. HASTINGS. Are you acquainted with this camp out here some 6 miles west?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is that typical of all their camps?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is it worse or better?

Mr. GIRTMAN. That is the lowest camp of Indians in the Everglades, and the lowest morals.

Mr. HASTINGS. Did you see this camp at Fort Lauderdale?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is that typical of their camps?

Mr. GIRTMAN. That is typical of the camps on this edge, but not typical of the camps back in where they have their permanent places.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, do they have any houses in the camps where they have permanent places?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They have better houses than they have here and they cover them a good deal with galvanized iron.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do any of these Indians cultivate the soil?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do they raise anything?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They raise a good deal.

Mr. HASTINGS. What do they raise?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They raise a good deal of sugar cane, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and a little corn.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is that general among them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; it is in the last few years.

Mr. HASTINGS. Getting to be more so, is it?

Mr. GIRTMAN. It is getting to be more so. On account of the price of hides and furs, they have to resort to a little farming. They have always raised some sugar cane.

Mr. HASTINGS. What do they do with the sugar cane?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They make sirup and rum out of it.

The CHAIRMAN. Do they sell any of it?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Very little. They sell very little sirup.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do the men do any work on the farm?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; but not much. The women do most of the work on the farm. The men do the hunting.

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, now, I understand there are about 550 or 600, perhaps, of the Seminoles. You claim a rather extensive acquaintance with them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. About what per cent of them speak the English language or can understand the English language, even if they speak it imperfectly?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, the proposition is with me that there is not any of them that I can't get through with; but I only speak a broken Indian, you see.

Mr. HASTINGS. You speak the Seminole language, don't you?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Not fluently.

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, you speak it so you can understand them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I can speak a few words.

Mr. HASTINGS. You can make them understand things you sell them in your store, can't you?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes; all that stuff; and I can talk with them enough to find out anything I want to from them; and, practically, I would say that nine-tenths of the men understand the English language well enough to get along with it. But there is only one woman of my acquaintance, and my long experience with them, that will speak the English language. They don't allow them to speak it.

Mr. HASTINGS. None of them attend schools, so far as you know, except two or three at Fort Lauderdale?

Mr. GIRTMAN. That is all.

Mr. HASTINGS. There is none in the western part, around the Everglades?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, has any Indian, so far as you know, an orange grove?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes; Charlie Tiger Tail has a few trees around his camp, as he is experimenting with them, and has gone out to my grove to learn how to take care of them with me two or three different times—what to do; how to bud them.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, when you say "a few trees," do you mean half a dozen, or something like that?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think he has half a dozen, from what I understand.

Mr. HASTINGS. These Indians, as I understand it, principally subsist on fishing and hunting?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Fishing and hunting.

The CHAIRMAN. Do they fish much?

Mr. GIRTMAN. A little; not very much. They are fishing only for their own consumption.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, what do they eat?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They eat just about as you would eat if you would go to a grocery store to buy a lot of groceries to go out to a camp. They eat a good deal of sugar, flour, lard, and grits, hominy, a small

percentage of rice—a very little rice—mostly grits, bacon, baking powder, soda, salt, black pepper. They are very fond of black pepper. They use very little tobacco.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do they smoke?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They smoke a little bit. They use very little. Some few of them chew a little bit. I never saw them snuff. The women, I don't think, use anything of that kind, but they smoke a little bit. They are not incessant smokers yet. Around town here they will smoke cigars, but you seldom sell them a cigar to carry away with them into their camps.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. How many different Indians have you traded with during your experience here?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think I have the heads of 84 or 85 families on my books.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Do you know how many Seminole Indians there are in the State?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think Mr. Kreele came nearest to getting the census of anyone that has ever been down here sent out from Washington. He figured out how many there were, and he got 465. I helped him on that. That has been about five or six years ago.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. How many of the Indians in this State do you think there are who raise agricultural products? You spoke of them raising sugar cane and other things. How many do you think there are who raise any agricultural products at all?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think practically every family in the last two or three years has raised some agricultural products.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Now, do some of these go from one camp to another?

Mr. GIRTMAN. That is floating trash that is on this coast right here.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. By that you mean such as these fellows up here at Fort Lauderdale and these out here 3 or 4 miles out of Miami?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, there is a floating bunch here that floats from Miami to Fort Lauderdale. We call it "Crop-eared Charlie's gang."

Mr. ELLSWORTH. The nomadic gang?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; we call it the "Crop-eared Charlie's gang." It is his offspring.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. How many are there of those?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Fifteen or twenty.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. You mean that the rest of them are not the floating kind?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They don't float like that bunch.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. They don't change their camp from one place to another?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, sir; that is the lowest of the Indians.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. How many of them stay in one place permanently the year round, year in and year out?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Very few.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Where do they carry out this agriculture?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Very few stay in their permanent place the year round. Billy Cony Patchie is about the most intelligent one on the west coast—reads and writes well and was five or six years with Capt. Henry in the western part—the other part of the glades across from

here—and went to school a little, and he has a permanent home over there and a good camp, but he came out here last winter and spent nearly two months right up Miami River here camping and digging compty, making starch to carry back home.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. A man who has a permanent home and raises agricultural products is really the exception, isn't he, rather than the rule, among the Seminoles?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes; there are only a few of them that have a real permanent home that stay right there all the time.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. There is not any considerable number of the Seminoles, then, who really raise farm products?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; not out in this vicinity. Now, you have got me twisted, I think. There is a bunch out there that stay there practically all the time, have got their homes and their farms, but they leave them for these vacations, I would call it, and get away on a hunt for maybe two months and then go back; but practically all of them in the last few years in this part of the glades are doing farming.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Now, practically all—that would be how many? Give us some idea of that.

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think there is about two-thirds of them down in this part of the glades and one-third in the upper part of the glades, what we call off from Fort Pierce.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. That is, you mean two-thirds of all in the State?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Are in this part and one-third in the other part?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. And you say practically all of the Seminoles in this part of the State, then, are—

Mr. GIRTMAN (interposing). Engaged to some extent in agriculture—that is, sugar cane, pumpkins, corn, and sweet potatoes.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Do they support themselves largely through agricultural pursuits?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, no; they support themselves—their money comes from their hunting.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. They simply raise these things and eat them, but don't bring them to market?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Very few bring anything to market. They bring a little bananas, and once in awhile a little sweet potatoes, once in awhile a little sugar corn, and sometimes sirup, but very little.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. What lands do they raise these on?

Mr. GIRTMAN. On the islands in the Everglades.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. They are squatters there?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. That is all.

Mr. NORTON. Do they own any land? Do the Indians own any land at all?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They don't know it if they do.

Mr. NORTON. They just claim to occupy the land?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They just camp as long as they want to in a place, or until some one encroaches on them, and then they move away to another place. From here to Fort Lauderdale are the best islands. Honey Hill and several of these places had Indian camps on them when we first came to Miami 20 years ago. Gradually the white man



came in and began to farm all around them and encroached on their property, or what they claimed, and they moved away back into the Everglades.

Mr. NORTON. Do you think it would be practical to locate these Indians on a reservation at one particular place?

Mr. GIRTMAN. You can't force them to anything. You can't persuade them. After years they will take to it, as they are forced to, but you can not persuade them. They have no confidence in you.

Mr. NORTON. Do any of these Indians vote?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, sir.

Mr. NORTON. What do these two men do for a living that are here?

Mr. GIRTMAN. The one behind is an Oklahoma man. He speaks as good as we do and is well educated himself. He is a missionary—a Baptist preacher, I believe.

Mr. NORTON. He speaks Creek?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. What is the other boy?

Mr. GIRTMAN. This other boy, Willy Willy, he belongs to what I term the best family of Indians in the Everglades—old Charlie Willy's gang. There is a big family of them. They are very neat, nice, clean, honest, and honorable, and, if I understand it right, hold themselves above the other Indians, while no one knows it except some one who has been associated with them for years.

Mr. NORTON. They are self-supporting?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. Of the five or six hundred Indians in the State, how many would you say were destitute and not able to support themselves?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, at present I would not think any, excepting this old floating gang here that is destitute. But I don't know just the present conditions. None of them starve to death; you couldn't starve any of them.

Mr. NORTON. Thirty or forty of them that have been exhibited to us at Fort Lauderdale and in the camp out near Miami?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes; but we don't know how soon they will be there, because it is very hard times with them now.

Mr. NORTON. You are acquainted with this camp out here at Fort Lauderdale?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. You are acquainted with the camp out 5 or 6 miles from Miami?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. Is that camp there used as a sort of a sight-seeing spot for visitors from the North?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. Do touring cars drive out there?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I will explain that. In the winter, about October, they begin to come into camp and there will be a bunch come from the Big Cypress with their hides and furs and things, and they make that the camp, because they can not get down Miami River. It is too dry to get down the canal and they stop there. There has generally been good water that far, and they will stop there. Sometimes there are 50 there, for 2 or 3 days. Then again in a week there

would hardly be only one little bunch there. And about this time of year they will leave, and they will stop there sometimes, and their women will pick beans out in that neighborhood there for those bean growers, and the men will go hunting; go back and hunt and leave the women there, and hunt a week or two and then come back with their hides and furs, and this Fort Lauderdale bunch, old Charlie's gang, camp there practically every winter and pick beans for those farmers.

Mr. NORTON. Do you know Tony Tommy?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; not Tony. He visits them. He will come down from Fort Lauderdale and go out on a bus, or hire a bicycle and ride out there and spend maybe a day or a day and night. But he doesn't stop there. This was Charlie Tommy, old Sally, Sam Huff, and Tom Tiger who died just a little while back, and the pick-aninnies and women that are connected with that bunch.

Mr. NORTON. Who is this Sam Huff?

Mr. GIRTMAN. He is a Fort Lauderdale Indian.

Mr. NORTON. Does he ever do any work?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Old Sally is his mother. He is practically worthless.

Mr. NORTON. Do you think that yourself and others who have the confidence of the Indians could induce or secure many of them to go upon a reservation that might be set aside by the State or Federal Government?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think so.

Mr. NORTON. And take up farming operations?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't say we can make any great rush; they won't make any rush like when you opened up the Government lands in Oklahoma, but you can gradually get them there. It may be that when they have confidence in it we could gradually get them there.

Mr. NORTON. What does this boy do for a living?

Mr. GIRTMAN. He hunts a good deal. He comes in here often. He speaks English and practically knows everybody in Miami; sort of a pet around the streets, and he sells their products for them.

Mr. SEARS. Why was his ear cut off?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Willy and Sam, his brother, had a fight, and Sam chewed the ear off, when they were about 18 or 19 years old.

Mr. TILLMAN. Barring the present company, then, we have come in contact with about the sorriest class of Seminole Indians?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; you have seen them about the sorriest here.

Mr. TILLMAN. Do you believe industrial schools could be established by the Government here that they would patronize?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I do not.

Mr. TILLMAN. Their normal condition is that of hunting?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Hunting and independency.

Mr. TILLMAN. They could not be induced to go on to farms and cultivate those farms unless they were driven to it, I suppose, by hunger, and by the fact that hunting is no longer profitable?

Mr. GIRTMAN. As long as there is any profit in hunting they would do just like we do—they would hunt. But when there is no profit in hunting, they are compelled to farm or do something else.

The CHAIRMAN. Isn't that about the same condition that exists with the white man?

Mr. GIRTMAN. About the same condition that exists with the white man, excepting that they have more intelligence than the white class of people.

The CHAIRMAN. Then they ought to be better off.

Mr. GIRTMAN. They ought to be better off.

Mr. SEARS. And if the Government, Mr. Girtman, had treated them halfway fairly, they would be better off, wouldn't they?

Mr. GIRTMAN. If the Government had treated them according to their ideas of squareness and honesty, they would have been a great deal better off and they would have had confidence in the Government.

Mr. SEARS. If the Government had carried out the treaty of 1832 instead of repudiating it—

Mr. GIRTMAN (interposing). They would have had confidence in them and be a different class of people and do different. You take a man like this man that writes his name as you saw it this morning, that never went into a schoolhouse in his life; take a man like I was showing you, that caught me in errors in figures, that was an expert accountant—tell me they haven't intelligence?

Mr. TILLMAN. They say Tony Tommy leads all of his white associates at school?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir. Now, there are a few, understand, that are not such bright minds, but it takes 10 or 15 years' close association with them to find that out.

Mr. TILLMAN. Do you think a reservation ought to be provided for them either by the State or the Government, and that they should be induced to go on that reservation if it could be done?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; and be marked out so they will know where that reservation is.

Mr. TILLMAN. Do you think it would be wise to make allotments now of 10 or 20 acres to them, or just give it to them in severalty?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think the wise plan would be to lay out a territory, square as they have it, 27,000 acres.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, you know their habits; you are acquainted with them. Where would you think would be the best location for these Indians in the State of Florida?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, I think they ought to have two or three. I think there ought to be one out in this Big Cypress country.

Mr. HASTINGS. Where is that from Miami?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't know just what direction it is.

What direction is it, Mr. Watson—southwest. Then there ought to be another one up in this Cow Creek section off of Fort Pierce, because there is a good bunch up there, and they understand that country and want to live in that country. And unless you have an allotment there they could not take on and move down here very readily.

Mr. HASTINGS. You spoke of some tract of Government lands, 26,000 or 27,000 acres, as I understood you. Now, where is that located?

Mr. GIRTMAN. That is over in near the Big Cypress. I don't know or understand just exactly where it is located, because it is unsurveyed.

Mr. HASTINGS. Why wouldn't that be a good location?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think it would be a good location, though I am not sure. There are good lands in that section.

Mr. HASTINGS. You know of it generally without going on it?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I feel like I have seen every foot of the Everglades and have not been 10 miles in it, because I have practically fitted up every Indian hunter and white hunter and got his story when he returned for 15 years. And I believe I know about as much about the Everglades as the man that has tramped every foot of it, because each man has a different story when he comes out.

Mr. HASTINGS. But you think these Indians ought to be located somewhere contiguous to the Everglades?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; that is where they hunt and that is where they understand how to live. And I think the ban ought to be taken off of the laws on hunting.

Mr. HASTINGS. The Federal Government could not do that with the State laws.

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; because they preserve the game better than our laws preserve the game, with the exception of the plume bird.

Mr. TILLMAN. There is a missionary from Oklahoma present here. Do these Indians embrace Christianity?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Not our kind of Christianity; these Indians don't. They have us surpassed in Christianity.

Mr. TILLMAN. They say he is a Baptist preacher?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; but that is a different tribe of people, and they have different religious ideas from these Indians.

Mr. TILLMAN. Has he made any converts among these people?

Mr. GIRTMAN. He has worked very little among the Seminole Indians of Miami. His work has been around Fort Pierce, and I don't know.

Mr. TILLMAN. He himself can tell about that.

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; he can tell us himself. These Indians, from my idea—of course, we all have different religious views—are ahead of his ideas, which is an orthodox idea. They are not orthodox. They believe when they die they go to the "happy hunting grounds," and that the Great Sun, or almighty, is good and gracious to all, sinners as well as saints.

Mr. TILLMAN. Do they believe in this legend of the red snake that brings on high water, as, formerly, alleged to destroy enemies and white people?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, sir; they have a little superstition of a rattlesnake. They won't kill a rattlesnake. They have a very few superstitions. A great many times they use a superstitious idea to the white man simply to get around doing what the white man wants him to do, when they are not superstitious.

The CHAIRMAN. How many trading posts did you have?

Mr. GIRTMAN. One.

The CHAIRMAN. Where was it stationed?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Two hundred and twenty-eight Twelfth Street.

The CHAIRMAN. I mean, how many have you had?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Just the one place.

The CHAIRMAN. Only had one since you have been in the business?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You say you have no business now?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I sold out two years ago. I am farming this winter.

The CHAIRMAN. Since that time you haven't had any commercial relations with the Indians?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; I have helped the man that I sold out to trading with the Indians. I am around there a great deal. I have several houses around town and come here tending to rents and property interests. I have my office down there and am very friendly with the man that bought me out, and have helped him out every way I could with the Indian trade.

The CHAIRMAN. You say most of the Indians are farmers?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Most of them are doing some farming.

The CHAIRMAN. Have they been driven to that by the conditions of the country?

Mr. GIRTMAN. The conditions on hides and furs.

The CHAIRMAN. You said they had houses. Just what kind of houses have they?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Now, I haven't seen their houses built, understand, but I have bought and helped them buy the lumber and the material, but I haven't seen their houses.

The CHAIRMAN. They have lumber houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. They have some lumber houses.

The CHAIRMAN. I believe you said they were covered with sheet iron?

Mr. GIRTMAN. A good many are covered with sheet iron. Some are covered with shingles.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you think about this house proposition? Don't you think they are better off living in their native kind of huts than they would be in houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I think they are better off in the open air. You can not close one of them up. He does not want to be closed up. Anyone is healthier in the open air in a climate like this than he is in a room.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, do you think if a reservation was given to these Indians that they would go away from these places where they now have houses and move on to other places and take up lands?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Not at once. It has got to be done gradually. They have got to be educated and driven to it.

The CHAIRMAN. Supposing we should send down a fellow from the civil service who never saw a Florida Seminole in his life, who knew nothing about it, what progress would he make toward getting these Indians to move upon these lands that might be purchased for them?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, when he went out to the camp to talk to them they would grunt a little, one or two would answer a few questions, and the rest of them would get off in a little group and poke fun at him.

The CHAIRMAN. And if they heard he was coming in advance, they would leave the camp?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir. They are very critical.

The CHAIRMAN. You spoke something about the Government not having treated the Indians fairly. I would like to have you give us something specific about that.

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't understand those ancient records of how they treated Osceola when they had him in prison in St. Augustine.

They carried him to Savannah and he died on the island out there from Savannah. These things are as fresh with many to-day as they were when they happened.

The CHAIRMAN. The principal thing that they have against the white man, then, is on account of the treatment of Osceola, do you think?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No, no; their laws are superior to our laws; they are governmental tribal laws, and our laws are more of a farce to them.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand; but what I was trying to get at is the specific unfair treatment that the Government has given them. We haven't anything in the record about that, except a general statement.

Mr. GIRTMAN. I couldn't tell you; only I know they are superstitious, and that is because the white man has not toted fair with them in the past.

The CHAIRMAN. I am just trying now to confine this to the Government.

Mr. GIRTMAN. And they are naturally superstitious of any Government official.

The CHAIRMAN. Then, if I understand you, when they say the Government has mistreated them they mean either the white man or the Government?

Mr. SEARS. Isn't it a fact, Mr. Girtman, that the Indians—the Seminoles of Florida—look on the white man as the Government?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; they don't do that. They know the white man's different ways, and that the Government representatives came through the country, and nine-tenths of them have the ideas that came out in the Metropolis yesterday, that they want to move them to Oklahoma, and they naturally rebel at the idea.

The CHAIRMAN. There wouldn't be any place to move them to Oklahoma.

Mr. GIRTMAN. But that is a statement in the newspapers, and they don't know the difference.

The CHAIRMAN. The Seminole lands have all been allotted in Oklahoma.

Mr. GIRTMAN. But they don't know the difference, and the first man that understands the Indian language, or if he can't talk, says, "Going to carry you Oklahoma," and they rebel right away at that, and they think the Government is behind that action.

The CHAIRMAN. There seems to be a general sentiment throughout the State, among the white people and Indians, that the Government has mistreated the Indians. I am not passing upon that either one way or the other. Then there seems to be a sentiment or sort of confusion in the minds of all—white man and Indian—between the Government itself and the white men who surround him?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, the thing I was trying to distinguish between was this: Just what mistreatment they have had at the hands of the Government, and just what mistreatment they have had at the hands of the white man.

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, I think that the biggest things are these old traditions of the Indian war time that they handed down and are fresh in the memory of these older Indians, who were boys, of course, along in those days.

The CHAIRMAN. I can understand how they might believe that they had been very badly treated, and perhaps they have, and I can understand how their ideas might be exaggerated in that.

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't know one case where the Government has ever mistreated an Indian, myself, personally.

Mr. SEARS. In the way of mistreatment, if the chairman will permit me, do or do not the Indians believe that, having once owned the State, they are entitled to some lands?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes; they think they are entitled to the Everglades.

The CHAIRMAN. To be frank, I think they are entitled to all they ever owned, unless they were paid for it.

Mr. GIRTMAN. When they went to digging canals in the Everglades the Indians were very superstitious. They didn't like it a bit. And in some cases I understand that when the surveyors went there they pulled up their stakes and destroyed them.

Mr. TILLMAN. I think there is one point I didn't get clearly in my mind. Now, this Indian present, this Willie Willie, and Tony Tommy are rather superior to the rest of the tribe?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Yes, sir; that is, to our idea; but to their idea they are not.

Mr. TILLMAN. Your testimony might read to some as if you desired to make it appear that a large number of these Indians were home builders. As a matter of fact, how many houses do you know of that amount to anything that they have built?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, I only know of their houses through hunters. I have never been within 10 miles of them.

Mr. TILLMAN. How many actual houses, now, have they built?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Well, now, Willie's father has a good house. Cypress Tiger's camp has good houses.

Mr. TILLMAN. How many?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't know; whatever is necessary there. You see, they go in sort of bands.

Mr. TILLMAN. Now, let us find out how many good houses they have built.

Mr. GIRTMAN. Billy Cony Patchie has a good house.

Mr. TILLMAN. That is three.

Mr. GIRTMAN. Hotalpokachee has a good house, and those Osceola boys—there are two or three of them that have good houses.

Mr. TILLMAN. That is five or six. Now, about how many shacks?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Practically all of them have shacks.

Mr. TILLMAN. The shacks greatly outnumber the good houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. What I mean by good houses is good houses for the Indians. It would not be a good house for us, but they have bought the lumber, to my knowledge, and carried it out there for building purposes.

Mr. TILLMAN. How many rooms are there in these houses—the best ones?

Mr. GIRTMAN. I don't know; I never saw one of them.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. You don't mean lathed and plastered houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; most of them are floored with lumber—box house, covered with tin or shingled.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. But they are not lathed or plastered houses at all?

Mr. GIRTMAN. No; they do not have that.

Mr. TILLMAN. And the shacks greatly outnumber the houses?

Mr. GIRTMAN. Oh, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that all?

Mr. Harjo, will you take the stand?

**STATEMENT OF MR. HENRY M. HARJO, OF OKMULGEE, OKLA.**

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you been in Florida, Mr. Harjo?

Mr. HARJO. Three years.

The CHAIRMAN. Since you have been here you have been a missionary to the Seminole Indians, have you not?

Mr. HARJO. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You tell in your own way about what your observation has been of the Seminole people in Florida.

Mr. HARJO. You want me to tell the conditions?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. HARJO. In the year 1901 I came here and stayed about two weeks only, but at first we had a Baptist association in our country and thought it best to send a man down here, and we picked out a full-blood Indian to work among the people down here. When they come down they wouldn't come down by themselves, because they couldn't speak English very well. So we had another man to bring them down here, and they took him out here to the Indian town near Lake Okechobee and left him out there and went back. And in about two days afterwards he got homesick—couldn't stay out there, and went back. And then our board—I found our board was going to give it up, and then I came down myself.

Mr. HASTINGS. Are you a full-blood Creek?

Mr. HARJO. Yes, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. And you speak the Creek and Seminole language?

Mr. HARJO. Well, the Creek and Seminole language is nearly alike.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, you were sent here as a missionary?

Mr. HARJO. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. And you have been here this time about three months?

Mr. HARJO. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. Now, where is your headquarters?

Mr. HARJO. Stuart, Fla.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is there a considerable band of Seminoles around you there?

Mr. HARJO. About 19 miles southwest of Stuart, and just about the same distance west of Jupiter.

Mr. HASTINGS. The Seminoles have no schools?

Mr. HARJO. No.

Mr. HASTINGS. They have no churches?

Mr. HARJO. No, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do they have any form of public worship?

Mr. HARJO. No; none that I know of.

Mr. HASTINGS. Have you tried to preach to them in a public way, or has your work among them been of an individual character?

Mr. HARJO. Well, I can not preach to them like I do over yonder because I can not get an audience, so I have to see them individually—talk to them individually.