

Mr. NORTON. About how many?

Mr. HARJO. About 200, I guess; maybe over 200, because they come here to camp a week and go off and some others come in, and I go out and see them every week. Those from Big Cypress, where this boy is living, about 40 miles from here. But over yonder the Okecho-bee Indians have a permanent camp. This camp out here is only a temporary camp. When they want to trade, they come over and camp out there.

Mr. SEARS. There is one question that we might get an answer on, Mr. Chairman—this witness is absolutely impartial. Do you know why the Indians are suspicious of the Government; or, as a witness before you mentioned, "superstitious"? Have you talked with them any?

Mr. HARJO. Yes.

Mr. SEARS. Can you tell the committee why that is?

Mr. HARJO. Well, the only way to do is to tell them about the history of the Israelites, and then come down to the Indian. They used to have customs, and then the children of the Israelites were told, "When you get your lands over yonder, the people over there have too many gods, you must not go to them, but the one that brought you out of the land of Egypt he is the only one; remember him and worship him." But when they got over there they got too many things there, and they looked around and the girls looked around and saw nice looking boys, and the boys looked around and saw nice looking girls, and they married with those people. That is where they violated the commands—and the Indians the same way. The older folks taught the young people not to, or the white man would get them; but he has not got them—whisky is the main thing; that is where they violated the commands. That is the great curse of the Indians. They never will quit. But the only way to do is to establish mission schools for them, from my observation, in our country, to establish mission schools among them and educate them. But the white man's school is all right if they teach right.

Mr. SEARS. Now, getting right down to it, do the Seminoles feel—in your conversation with them, or have they intimated to you that they feel that the Government owes them land?

Mr. HARJO. No.

Mr. SEARS. Don't know anything about that?

Mr. HARJO. No; I have mentioned it, but they don't think so. They think this country here belongs to the Indian, but the white people coming in and getting too numerous just crowded them out.

Mr. SEARS. They feel that the country belonged to the Indians, but gradually were forced back by the whites?

Mr. HARJO. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Then their antipathy is not so much to the Government as it is to the white man?

Mr. HARJO. Yes, sir.

STATEMENT OF MR. J. W. WATSON, MERCHANT, OF MIAMI, FLA.

The CHAIRMAN. You are a member of the State legislature?

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you lived in Florida?

Mr. WATSON. About 36 years.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you very familiar with the Seminole Indians?

Mr. WATSON. I have had considerable dealings with them, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Just state, Mr. Watson, what your observation has been.

Mr. WATSON. Well, I ought to state, in the first place, Mr. Chairman, that the people of this section are certainly glad that you gentlemen have come down here in person, that you may see the actual conditions of these Seminole Indians. There is no question on earth, sir, but what it is a serious condition, and it is getting worse, and when these glades are drained, which are now their source of supply and their money—when they are drained it is going to be a great deal worse.

Now, I have dealt with them in the stores thirty-odd years ago in Kissimmee when I lived there. I used to sell them guns, ammunition, and things in my line—I am in the hardware business. But a very few years after Kissimmee opened up, the white man began to go down the river—they were there then at Fort Gardner, quite a bunch of them, and one or two other places, but they moved off. They didn't seem to have any desire, whatever, to stay close around the white man. They went on down around this Indian town and Cow Creek, and farther on down.

Now, here in Miami I traded with them—or, at least, they traded with me—a great many of them. I have seen them a great deal. I have been through the glades on all sides of it and all through it two or three times. I know a great many of them, and I know that their condition is such that someone—and, in my judgment, the United States Government—should come to their assistance.

Now, as a member of the legislature of Osceola County, about 13 years ago, I introduced and secured the passage of a bill appropriating money to build a schoolhouse down at Indian town—in fact, any place where they would go to school—and I had no trouble in securing the passage of the bill. The money was appropriated and a committee appointed to take charge of the matter, but they could never get a single Indian child into the schoolhouse. The old Indians just would not stand for it a minute.

The CHAIRMAN. You built a schoolhouse?

Mr. WATSON. We built a schoolhouse, but they would not attend. And my judgment is now that if you were to build a schoolhouse around every camp, unless you had some way of forcing them to attend or had some one there that they had perfect faith and confidence in, you would never get them into the schoolhouse. But I am satisfied that unless they break away from what they are doing to-day—just loafing around the camps, the children in perfect idleness and ignorance—that when they grow up they will be just about like the older ones are to-day. Of course there are some exceptions. We have some rather good Indians to-day, but their mode of living is by hunting. Some of them have a half acre or an acre of farm and a little sugar cane, but they live by shooting the alligator, catching the otter, and the plume bird. And all of those live and survive in these everglades that are wet, and when they are drained that occupation is gone, and the Indians are right now at the jumping-off place. If they go just a few miles farther they have got to go into the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, whose business it is to come to their relief, I do not know. I do believe, however, that the Government should do so. I am sure the State will cooperate with the Government and render them any assistance it can, but they believe that the Government should show their willingness and desire on their part to come in and help them.

The CHAIRMAN. How much land do you think it would take for them?

Mr. WATSON. I do not believe it well to let them have too much land. I think if they had 20 or 40 acres of land each they would have an abundance. I remember—I was on a committee of the legislature at the time—Indian Committee—I having come from a section where the Indians were living, and we set aside considerable land as an Indian reservation down here at Long Key. I never followed it up, and I don't know why the Indians were never located on it.

The CHAIRMAN. I think there was a provision in that act which cited that the Indians should have it, not to conflict with any previous transfer of the land, and the land had been already transferred.

Mr. WATSON. Well, possibly that is a fact—that the railroad beat the Indians out of it, or something of that kind.

The CHAIRMAN. How much could this land be bought for?

Mr. WATSON. I could not tell you, but I believe if the State has got any land there they would be only too glad to sell it for a nominal price for this purpose.

The CHAIRMAN. Has the state any land left?

Mr. WATSON. They have about 4,000,000 acres left.

The CHAIRMAN. Under water?

Mr. WATSON. Most of it is in the Glades. It is yet to be drained.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the prospect?

Mr. WATSON. It is good.

The CHAIRMAN. About what time would you say that that land would be in a state where it can be cultivated?

Mr. WATSON. If we succeed in getting passed through the next legislature a bill that we are preparing—I say "we"; I mean the people in the immediate drainage vicinity who are more familiar with the drainage operation than those who live in the western portion of the State—we have every reason to believe that the drainage will be perfected in four years on this side anyway.

The CHAIRMAN. Do all the drainage ditches come this way in the Everglades?

Mr. WATSON. No, sir; they have a canal in the Caloosahatchie River that runs west to the Gulf of Mexico.

The CHAIRMAN. Only one?

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. How many drainage ditches coming in this way?

Mr. WATSON. One at Snapper Creek and one at Miami, 2; 1 at Fulford is 3; 1 at Ojus connecting outside there is 4; 2 at Fort Lauderdale is 6; 1 at Boynton, 7; 1 at Deerfield, 8; 1 at Palm Beach, 9; and 1 at Stuart, 10.

The CHAIRMAN. About what area will each of those canals drain—just estimate.

Mr. WATSON. I couldn't say, sir, but they claim that when this one that they are now building at Stuart, which is larger than any

three that they now have, is completed they seem to think it will take care of this whole section on this side. But in my judgment—and I have been over it and studied it considerably—I do not think it will until they run a canal north and south, coming back this way, and cutting this side off by itself.

The CHAIRMAN. How are the State lands disposed of?

Mr. WATSON. Under law it must be advertised and sold to the highest and best bidder.

The CHAIRMAN. At public auction?

Mr. WATSON. At public auction.

The CHAIRMAN. Any price placed on them?

Mr. WATSON. No, sir; I don't think there is.

The CHAIRMAN. Are the sales made prior to the time that the water is drained off the lands or after?

Mr. WATSON. Unfortunately, sir, most of the land has been sold already, and no drainage yet. Most of it was sold before the drainage was performed.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think there would be enough State land left to provide the Indians with land?

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir; I know there is, and I believe that if the State doesn't possess this land in a location where it should be for this Indian reservation, that they would be willing to sell lands that they do own and take that money to buy this land, or they would sell their lands to the Government and let the Government take this money and buy this land down here.

The CHAIRMAN. How much land has the Government in the State?

Mr. WATSON. They have got some down in this section. My son returned two days ago from the west coast. He has been out there five weeks with another party locating some lands over there, and there are quite a lot of homesteads there right in the heart of this Indian section where they are living, but how much they have I do not know. But I was talking to him yesterday, and he had an Indian with an ox team or two and left the west coast and came yag back here 30 miles, on the west edge of the Glades. He seems to think that that would be the place for a reservation—that is, for that portion of them anyway over there.

Mr. NORTON. How far is it across the Glades from here?

Mr. WATSON. I should think about 38 to 40 miles.

Mr. NORTON. Across the Glades?

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORTON. Thirty-eight or forty miles wide?

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir. Then there is a prairie over there, and pine ridge, and then you get into that big-cypress country. You go through that and get to the Gulf of Mexico.

Mr. TILLMAN. As a merchant, you have dealt exclusively with the Indians—what would you say, going back five years ago when conditions were normal, what would be the average income of an Indian family?

Mr. WATSON. Some of them in their hunting five or eight years ago did very well. I have seen them come into the store with a pretty good roll of money, and buy their supplies. But the hunting is just about playing out.

Mr. TILLMAN. Going back five years ago, what would you say would be the maximum income of an Indian head of a family?

Mr. WATSON. I should think if any of them got \$600 or \$700 he did exceedingly well.

Mr. TILLMAN. The average would be about that?

Mr. WATSON. The average would not be over \$150.

Mr. TILLMAN. You don't think we could do much good in establishing Government industrial schools here for the Indians, do you?

Mr. WATSON. Well, I don't know. I believe if you would establish an industrial school here and just have it compulsory, and let these people understand that their children must attend, and see that they do attend, I know the results would be beneficial.

Mr. TILLMAN. Say we established one central industrial school and sought to compel the attendance of the Indian child, and put in charge of those schools educated Seminoles from Oklahoma, women, say, don't you think, then, we could make a success of it?

Mr. WATSON. I think that would be a good idea.

Mr. TILLMAN. Don't you think that is about the only kind of a school we could establish successfully?

Mr. WATSON. I think that would be a better kind to undertake, decidedly, because if there is anything they do need or are going to need, these children, it is knowledge of industry—something they can earn a living by.

Mr. TILLMAN. Would you say one central school would be better than half a dozen local schools scattered over the reservation or over the State?

Mr. WATSON. Well, I should think it would require three, at least—one at the Cypress country, one at Fort Lauderdale, and one in the Cow Creek country. An arrangement so these squaws or families could live close in so the children could attend, I think, would overcome this difficulty or this sentiment against the white man.

Mr. TILLMAN. Would you say, as a whole, the Indians are deteriorating, advancing, or standing still?

Mr. WATSON. Well, I don't know as they are advancing any. I don't see any evidences of it. There are some now that are all right and take care of themselves under all circumstances. Now, I sold one here recently a cane mill. I think he is this boy's father; and I asked him how he was going to grind that cane with this mill, and he said that he and another Indian were going to push it themselves. Now, if he had some one out there to show him and teach him, at least, to see that he had a little pony or something to grind this cane, other Indians would see it and they would go along on the same lines. It would be beneficial to all of them. But the idea of a man grinding cane by pushing a three-roll mill himself—I don't see how he is going to do it.

Mr. TILLMAN. Do you think it would be better for the Indian if the Government would take charge of him and treat him as a ward, or throw him on his own resources and let him shift for himself?

Mr. WATSON. Well, these older ones, I think it would be actually better to let them look out for themselves if you could locate them on a piece of land and let them understand that they had to make a living from that land. If you undertake just to treat them as wards, give them a pension and all that, that is going to satisfy them all right, too, but they are not going to make much progress.

Mr. TILLMAN. As far as their personal habits are concerned they are a reasonably chaste people, are they not?

Mr. WATSON. Yes; they are.

Mr. TILLMAN. But the males are inclined to drink, are they not?

Mr. WATSON. They drink every time they can get an opportunity, but I tell you I have had lots of dealings with them and they are just about as truthful a set of people and honest, too, as it has ever been my privilege to know.

Mr. TILLMAN. But the first thing for the Government to do is to keep whisky away from them?

Mr. WATSON. That is the main thing. They come to Miami—supposed to be a dry town—it is against the law to give it to the Indians, but they get drunk if they can get the money.

Mr. TILLMAN. It is best for the Indian and the white man, too, to keep whisky away from them.

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir; and it looks like you are doing all you can to keep it away from them.

Mr. TILLMAN. We are doing all we can, and we are going to continue it. I am practically, as well as theoretically, a prohibitionist.

Mr. WATSON. I think you are on the right line.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Harjo, have any of the Seminoles of Florida accepted the Baptist faith since you have been here?

Mr. HARJO. Not a one.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you been here?

Mr. HARJO. This is my third year.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you ever had public religious services?

Mr. HARJO. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You can not have them?

Mr. HARJO. No.

The CHAIRMAN. They won't come?

Mr. HARJO. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, do they have any suspicion against you on account of your religion?

Mr. HARJO. No; not that I know of.

The CHAIRMAN. But they won't have anything to do with the religion?

Mr. HARJO. But over here at Okeechobee we have another man down there, and I have just given him that field, so I am just traveling along the road, you know. And then he told me that he had a meeting over there. He said several came to the meeting there.

STATEMENT OF MR. WILLIE WILLIE, A SEMINOLE INDIAN.

Mr. HASTINGS. How old are you, Mr. Willie?

Mr. WILLIE. Twenty-one years old.

Mr. HASTINGS. How long have you lived around here? Where is your home?

Mr. WILLIE. My home is in the Everglades.

Mr. HASTINGS. About how many miles from here?

Mr. WILLIE. About 50 miles from here.

Mr. HASTINGS. Have you lived out there all your life?

Mr. WILLIE. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. What is your father's name?

Mr. WILLIE. Charlie Willie.

Mr. HASTINGS. What is your mother's name?

Mr. WILLIE. Sally Willie.