

CHAPTER IX

RECOMMENDATIONS

What is best for the Florida Seminoles? I recommend:

CARRY ON

1. That the Indian Service carry on in Florida for another quarter century, but survey the whole question anew every 10 years.

ALIENATE NO LAND

2. That the title to no land be alienated by allotments or otherwise.

SEMINOLE AGENT

3. That the Seminole agent be a man of vigorous physique—none other can get about these swamps—a man who can cooperate effectively with State agencies and capitalize the large amount of latent good will which exists in Florida.

I should expect few tangible results from him within two years; it will require two years of almost constant sojourning in the Seminole camps to gain the confidence of these Indians. Everything hinges upon the establishment of this personal relationship. The Seminole can be led by one he trusts, but can not be driven.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS FIRST

4. That, having gained their confidence, the agent devote himself chiefly to bettering the economic position of the Seminoles.

The first item would be throwing the Martin County lands open to the Okeechobee Indians and doing everything possible to persuade families to take up residence, where they can be guaranteed permanent occupancy rights.

The second item would be helping Indian men to find top markets for their furs and Indian women for the products of their handicrafts.

The third would be the supervision of the cattle development on the Hendry County Reservation, and later the encouragement of those competent to own individual herds.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

5. That the agent's principal assistant be a public health nurse, as suggested by Doctor Claxton of the State board of health.

I would place her in charge of the home for the sick and indigent at Dania, where she may occupy quarters in the administration building. During the dry season of the year, whenever the needs of the sick at Dania permit, she should visit the camps and do such public health work as the board of health maps out.

TEACHER

6. That the elementary school at Dania be continued. If, or when, the time comes that Indians become willing to have their children educated, this little school should be expanded to include boarding pupils. But I should keep it as an elementary school, transferring the pupils to the public schools as soon as they had acquired proficiency in English.

CARETAKER AT HENDRY COUNTY RESERVATION

7. That the remuneration for the caretaker at the Hendry County Reservation be increased from \$25 to \$75 a month. The isolation of this post is so great that very few reliable men can be found to accept it. Having found one such in Wm. Ivey Byrd, I should endeavor to keep him. A trading post there would save Indians weary trips to Immokalee and cut down liquor consumption.

FARMER-LABORER

8. That the position of farmer-laborer at Dania be abolished.

INSTRUCTOR IN HANDICRAFTS

9. That a woman competent to give instruction in the camps in weaving, basketry, pottery, and beadwork be sent for six months during the dry season to the end that handicrafts may be developed among Seminole women. This appointment would be purely temporary; whether one or two seasons would be necessary can only be determined by results.

MEDICAL

10. That the services of Government physicians in Fort Myers and Lemon City be dispensed with, retaining the services of physicians in Everglades, Okeechobee, near Dania, and in one Miami hospital.

11. That the Government discontinue paying the doctor's bills for Indians making their living in commercial amusement camps.

12. That some provision be made for a large amount of dental work, either by sending down temporarily a Government dentist or by contracting for the work here on the best terms obtainable.

HOSPITALIZATION

13. That except in emergency cases, all hospitalization be concentrated in one of the Miami hospitals.

Any Indian requiring hospitalization must be moved in an automobile. Unless at the point of death, he can just as easily be transported to the best. The largest Miami hospital is the only one which will accept an Indian venereal case.

COOPERATION WITH STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

14. That in all matters pertaining to medicine and hospitalization the agent advise with the officers of the State board of health.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

15. That cooperation all along the line be made a leading policy. Seminoles are in Florida to stay. The day must soon come when they assume all of the obligations and demand all of the rights of Florida citizenship. Cooperation with all State agencies and local governments is eminently desirable. I have no doubt but that the demonstration agents of the department of home economics at Tallahassee would willingly lend assistance. In all problems of agriculture and stock raising there are experts at the Gainesville Experiment Station ready to lend a hand.

LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS

16. That inasmuch as the bulk of the Indians live in the Big Cypress, from which Dania is distant 130 miles—farther to most of the camps—the headquarters of the Seminole Agency be moved to Collier County.

Everglades, the county seat of Collier County, has telephone, telegraph, and rail service; there is an excellent hotel; civilized people make it their home. The agent must do a vast deal of traveling in any case, but the crux of the Seminole problem is where the bulk of Seminoles live, and that is in Collier County.

TRANSPORTATION

17. That automobiles be furnished the agent, the public health nurse, with a light truck for the Hendry County caretaker.

The Ford is the best car now built to get through the swamps.

If the agent did not use up one Ford car a year, I should suspect him of neglecting his work. I mean that the wear and tear on cars off the highways is unimaginably brutal.

CATTLE

18. That the Hendry County Reservation again be put into shape to pasture cattle. The fences, built in 1920, are in many places down.

As soon as the fence is repaired, a few range cattle should be purchased, either by the Government or by private philanthropy, and the caretaker start building up an Indian herd. The whole proposition must be treated as one in education, to the end that after some years Indians may have acquired sufficient technique so that they can begin building up herds of their own on the Henry County lands.

LIQUOR

19. That an undercover man or two be sent down to put half a dozen of the more notorious bootleggers peddling liquor to the Indians behind the bars.

COMMERCIAL INDIAN VILLAGES

20. That, inasmuch as the obnoxious commercial villages have been organized in more than one Florida city, the Florida Legislature

be asked for a law "making it a misdemeanor to harbor these Indians for amusement purposes," as suggested by the late Hon. Clement S. Ucker.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

21. That Mr. Ucker's suggestion of an advisory council of six, three white citizens and three Indians, also be adopted.

Whatever will increase local interest and participation in Indian affairs is desirable; whatever will stimulate the Seminole to take a long view of his own problems is to be desired. Transportation would have to be furnished the Indian members of such a council.

TROPIC EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

22. That upon establishing the Tropic Everglades National Park the Monroe County Reservation be exchanged for an equal acreage in one solid block in Collier County north of the Tamiami Trail, and title thereto be transferred from the State of Florida to the United States.

I have omitted reference to the cost of Seminole administration, which, in recent years, has amounted to about \$12,000 annually. This appropriation must be somewhat increased if my suggestions be accepted. The problem goes deeper than dollars. The expenditure of a billion would not rectify the wrongs of the Seminole wars, nor pay the debts of a generation that is dead. The only proper approach to the problem is, what is best for the Florida Seminoles?

Respectfully submitted.

ROY NASH,

Special Commissioner to Negotiate with Indians.

HON. CHARLES J. RHOADS,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs.