

SCANDAL IN INTERIOR DEPARTMENT NOW

Dawes Commission Also Involved in Ugly Charges.

KNOX INVESTIGATING CASE

High Officials Charged with Forming Companies to Loot Indians—Court Officials and District Attorneys in the Game.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15.—The smoldering scandal in the Interior Department has at last burst into flame. The report of Samuel M. Brosius, general agent of the Indian Rights Association, who has been investigating the condition of things in the Indian Territory, indicates that a scandal has been unearthed in comparison with which most of the other recently reported scandals in Government departments are paltry. Not only the Interior Department, but the Dawes Commission, an independent body appointed by the President, is involved.

Secretary Hitchcock has requested the Department of Justice to take up the matter, and that department has undertaken an investigation of its own. Reports of an outrageous condition of affairs have persisted for a year, and when Mr. Hitchcock was in the Territory two or three months ago the charges were brought to his attention, and he promised an investigation.

Mr. Brosius's report implicates a number of officials, including Tams Bixby of Minnesota, Chairman of the Dawes Commission; Thomas B. Needles, a member of the commission; Guy P. Cobb, Internal Revenue Collector for the Territory; Gov. Moseley of the Chickasaw Nation; Indian Inspector George Wright, who has been the personal representative of the Secretary of the Interior in the Territory; E. Pliny Soper, United States District Attorney for the Northern District of the Territory, and minor officials.

The wrongs complained of grow out of the administration of the allotment law, under which it was the intention of Congress to cause the Indian to cultivate land and secure for himself individual property rights, leaving the surplus of land in the various reservations after the Indians have made their selections to be sold for the benefit of the Government will allow a lease to run.

With the exception of those tribes in the Indian Territory, where white men have secured long leases of fine grazing lands and have intruded to prevent allotments, the Indians of the various tribes in the Territory have selected their allotments, many have failed to make homes and raise crops. When the individual has taken this allotment it has been the practice of the white men who infest the reservations to persuade him to lease it and live on the rent—usually after a five years' lease has been made, this being the longest term for which the Government will allow a lease to run.

The whites have gone on the Indians' land and refused to pay rent. The reports of the Indian Office show that there are on an average over 2,000 complaints every year from the Five Tribes against the refusal of lessees to pay rent or to get out of the Indians' land. In the Choctaw and Chickasaw agreements with the Dawes Commission the United States agreed to put each allottee in possession of his land and remove all objectionable persons from it. In practice, however, this has not been done, the authorities never going beyond a formal notice to the lessee to vacate when he is in default.

The Indian, being poor, has not been able to get into the United States Court, as he is unable to pay the cost of the suit. In one year a gigantic wrong has been going on under the eyes of the officials of the Interior Department, and the Government has been guilty of a colossal fraud.

Another method of getting the Indian lands better was by the allotment from the heirs of an allottee. The allotment law provides that the Indian shall not get a deed of conveyance until the expiration of twenty-five years after he has made his selection. But in the case of the death of an allottee it has been the practice for the heirs to sell the land.

Although this is in violation of the Federal law, the courts have been unable to do anything to prevent it. In the case of Arkansas, where the land is the most profitable business to buy and sell, the method is to give a note with a small cash payment for the note to go to court by default. Or if he sues he gets judgment, and the defendant, having made the note, promptly pays the judgment, and so has an equitable title.

LOT FOR DAWES COMMISSION.

Mr. Brosius charges that in these irregular practices, which are all against the law and in defiance of the position of the Indian Office as a guardian to the Indians, members of the Dawes Commission have engaged on a large scale and have defrauded thousands of Indians and made immense gains. A copy of this has been furnished to Secretary Hitchcock, that Tams Bixby of Minnesota, the President of the Interior, the President of the Dawes Commission, the President of the Chickasaw Nation, and the President of the Canadian Valley Trust Company, which is doing the same sort of business.

Of the International Bank and Trust Company, which is engaged in this class of investments, the Dawes Commission is Vice President, and the International Bank and Trust Company is also a stockholder in this company, and concerning his position Mr. Brosius says:

"E. Pliny Soper is a large stockholder and Vice President of the company. The Attorney General of the District of Columbia, who is the Attorney General of the Northern District of Indian Territory, whose duty it is under the law to

prosecute persons for the excessive leasing of land and to defend the Indians in all cases of law or equity involving the Indians' land.

This company was incorporated on March 25, 1892, in the State of New York. The company, in which Bixby is a stockholder and Vice President and also a stockholder, was organized in February, 1902. Wright's connection with the scandal is highly incriminating. He has been acting as the representative of Secretary Hitchcock in all matters growing out of the allotment system. He has been acting as an independent body, appointed by the President and not controlled by the Secretary. It is his duty to defend the department's interests to have a man there to look out for things from the department's standpoint. Wright is the representative of the Interior Department watchdog to see that nothing went wrong. If Brosius's report is correct the watchdog pooled issues with the wolves.

A number of other Federal officials are mixed up in the scandal, among them the Assistant United States District Attorney and the Clerk of the United States Court. The investigation will be long and tedious, and will have most extensive ramifications, but it should be begun immediately by a force of competent men, and should cover the entire Indian Territory from bottom. Twenty million acres of land are involved and millions of dollars in money, to say nothing of the interests of some 400,000 Indians.

It is impossible for any Government official to deal with the matter impartially in Indian lands to be entirely impartial in his decisions when he is doing the will of the Indian Commissioner. I do not think that any of the officials whose names appear in the report of the Interior Department should be allowed to act in any way in connection with the matter. It is believed that if an investigation is opened it will show that the Interior Department has been grossly deceived from the Indians and that the United States laws have been defiantly disregarded.

The Chairman of the Dawes Commission, Tams Bixby, is a prominent Minnesota Republican politician in Illinois. He achieved renown many years ago as a member of the Illinois State Bar Association. He was the successor, as Chairman, of the late ex-Senator Horace E. Hoar, who was the first to bring the commission into being and was its first head.

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HARBOR TUG RAMS EXCURSION STEAMER

The William Storle Has 275 Persons on Board When Struck.

Midland Beach Boat's Collision Bulkhead Saves Her from Sinking When the Stranahan Cut Off Her Stem.

With about 275 persons on board, the Midland Beach steamer William Storle yesterday when off Bay Ridge on her way to New York was in collision with the steamship J. S. T. Stranahan, and a narrow escape from a most serious accident. As it was the twenty-first of the William Storle for a distance of probably a foot and a half was cut off from the upper deck to a foot below the water line, necessitating the landing of the passengers at the Immigration Pier on the Battery and leaving the injured craft in a Hoboken basin for extensive repairs.

That a serious accident was averted is due entirely to the fact that for some reason or other the builders of the Storle provided her with a collision bulkhead, rendering it impossible for the water to get in unless the hole was knocked in the distance beyond the stem. When then the craft would probably stay afloat. It was said, as she has other bulkheads that are believed to be just as staunch as the one that kept her afloat yesterday afternoon.

Elmer Sheridan, Captain of the William Storle, said after the accident that the collision was proceeding at good speed toward Manhattan when suddenly, just before he was off the mouth of the Gowanus Canal, the Stranahan came steaming out of that waterway. Capt. Sheridan says he immediately sounded his siren, twice as a warning to the Stranahan to stop, but that for some reason or other the Captain of that craft failed to answer, at least, he added, he did not hear any reply. The Stranahan, he says, turned up stream in the direction he was going, and was a little ahead, and above the Storle, when the collision occurred. Then he noticed, Capt. Sheridan said, that the Stranahan seemed to be drawing nearer to him. He whistled again, but there was no reply until the lighter was right off his bow, when suddenly that craft rammed the Storle in the side.

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"LOOP'S" SECOND VICTIM.

Bicyclist Falls in Luna Park and is Expected to Die.

Thirty thousand spectators at Luna Park last night saw "Hakem's Death-Trap Loop" claim its second victim within a week. When John M. Peters, twenty-five years old, of Clarendon Hotel, Coney Island, a daring performer on the Death-Trap Loop, fell from the top of the loop, coming down the fatal incline and was precipitated to the board walk thirty feet below, where, in plain sight of the horrified spectators—among them a young woman he was engaged to marry—Peters received injuries from which the physicians who attended him say he cannot possibly recover.

It was just a week ago yesterday when William Gorham, the original performer of the dangerous feat, fell as did Peters, only to be carried away a bruised and blood-stained form, to a hospital, where he is now in a dying condition. Peters succeeded in making his feat, and since he undertook the perilous feat his performance has passed but Elsie Mayo, his fiancée, who occupies a cottage at the seaside resort, has been there to nervy him for his task and to watch his every movement until he was safely back with her again.

The young woman was there last night and fell in the same way as did Peters, in the tragic event. She was one of a dozen women who fainted and were picked up by physicians and carried to the manager's office. In the bustle and excitement that followed the accident, the physicians lost sight of Miss Mayo for a moment. When they looked for her she was nowhere to be found. Fearing that she had been given away under her anxiety and sorrow, a searching party was at once organized, but its efforts to find her were futile up to a late hour.

The "Death Loop" has formed one of the greatest attractions of Luna Park, and the creators of the feat have made a fortune at every performance. The perilous feat is performed by a man who is suspended by his bicycle and his feet from a loop of wire, and at least one-half of the 30,000 spectators that crowded about the loop every night were seen to weep as they watched the feat.

It was 9:40 o'clock when Peters appeared with his bicycle and mounted to the top of the loop. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start.

A thrill ran through the crowd as the rider started. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start.

There is one narrow plank in the center of the incline that is painted black. If he falls he will be killed. The rider may circle the loop and safely reach the shallow artificial lake at the bottom of the loop. If he deviates but slightly to one side or the other it means an accident, just as it would mean an accident if he were to touch the water.

With bated breath the multitude saw him start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start. A cheer went up from the spectators as they saw the performer start.

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