

of the Canadian border than there is for the same distance south of it.

Why has not this land been developed? The frank answer is that we did not realize until within a few years that it was worth developing. As soon as we discovered its value as a national asset we became alarmed and drew back, affrighted at the thought that we might lose it, or at least that it would become the property of those who would exploit it without respect to the public interest. Since then we have been waiting to make up our minds as to what wisely could be done. We have hesitated and halted out of the very keenness of our appreciation of what Alaska might become. It has rather been in compliment to Alaska than in derogation of her value that we have done so little for her in late years. It was a new land, to be opened under new conditions. The mistakes made there and here we did not wish to repeat. But now after a long pause it would seem to be the sense of the people that we shall proceed at once and in a large way to deal with the problem of Alaskan development.

We have withdrawn Alaska from the too aggressive and self-serving exploiter. What have we to substitute as a safer servant of public interest? To this question I have given much thought, and my conclusion is that if we are to bring Alaska into the early and full realization of her possibilities we must create a new piece of governmental machinery for the purpose. We should undertake the work in the spirit and after the method of a great corporation wishing to develop a large territory. In my judgment the way to deal with the problem of Alaskan resources is to establish a board of directors to have this work in charge. Into the hands of this board or commission I would give all the national assets in that territory, to be used primarily for her improvement—her lands, fisheries, Indians, Eskimos, seals, forests, mines, waterways, railroads—all that the nation owns, cares for, controls, or regulates. Congress should determine in broad outline the policies which this board in a liberal discretion should elaborate and administer, much as is done as to the Philippines. This board would of course have nothing whatsoever to do with the internal affairs of the organized territory of Alaska, for it would exercise no powers save such as congress granted over the property of the United States in Alaska.

There are several reasons which appeal to me as supporting this suggestion:

1. Such a board could advise congress as to what should be done, without prejudice, out of a deep national interest and with first-hand knowledge of conditions.
2. Such a board would coordinate the present enterprises of the government in Alaska. As it is now, the control of lands is in one department, of forests in another, of roads in another, of fisheries in a fourth, of railroads in still another. The care of black bear is in one department and of brown bear in another.
3. There can be no satisfactory administration of land laws nor any other laws at a distance of 5,000 miles from the point of action. Much less is this possible where the two sections of the country are separated by an ocean, and the land calling for attention is closed to the world one-half of the year. The eye that sees the need should be near the voice that gives the order.
4. Alaska's opening and improvement should be treated as one problem. Each step in such an administration should be part of a plan, not an isolated act. We should have a unified and consecutive program, based on immediate knowledge governing this work. Each line of activity within the territory should be correlated with all other activities. The opening of lands and the building of railroads or wagon roads, for instance, should be part of one scheme.
5. Alaska should be developed so far as possible out of her own revenues and resources. She should have a federal budget of her own. Her revenues and expenditures should be presented to congress on a single sheet. The funds raised from her lands and fisheries, her furs, her forests, and her mines should be used for the construction of her roads, railroads, telegraph and telephone lines, or for any other purpose which would make her resources more quickly available to the world. I believe it could be shown that Alaska is self-supporting today, or, what is more to the point, that by proper taxes and charges imposed upon those who are deriving large return from their enterprise in the territory, such revenue could be derived as would support a large policy of expansion and improvement.

In short, I would construct the administrative machinery that would most surely lead to a prompt and continuous development of Alaska as a part of the United States upon a plane commensurate with her possibilities industrially, agriculturally, and socially.

Strongly as I would urge this method of management—for it offers a rare opportunity to exhibit the efficiency of a republic—I would not have Alaska wait for needed legislation until the merits of such a plan could be passed upon by congress. Those things which appeal to me as of immediate necessity upon which independent action may be taken are (1) the construction of railroads in the territory and (2) the opening of her coal lands.

I have already expressed to congress my belief that it was wise for the government itself to undertake the construction and operation of a system of trunk-line railroads in Alaska. And I am led to this view irrespective of the possibility of private enterprise undertaking such work, although my belief is that no railroads would be privately constructed in Alaska for many years to come excepting as adjuncts to some private enterprise.

The coal fields should be opened not to speculators but to operators. Those should have these lands who will use them. None should be opened as a basis for a gamble in future values. If these premises express a sound public policy, there appears to me but one conclusion that can be reached as to the manner in which they may safely be turned over to the public—under a leasing and royalty system similar to that under which the state of Minnesota leases its ore lands and the states of Montana and Colorado their coal lands.

#### INDIAN AFFAIRS

When interviewed recently by a representative of the Denver Times, Mr. Cato Sells, commissioner of Indian affairs, gave the following interesting information concerning his plans for the advancement of the nation's wards:

"The service for the suppression of the liquor traffic among the Indians is composed of one chief special officer, one assistant chief special officer and fifteen assistant special officers, whose work is supplemented by 151 deputies, consisting of service employes, United States deputy marshals, and other individuals assigned to particular cases or localities.

"There are now more than 300,000 Indians distributed throughout twenty-four states of the union. Wherever Indians are located upon reservations which have not been opened to settlement, the jurisdiction of the federal government is complete. Upon others, which have been opened to settlement, the government continues limited authority by reason of provisions of treaties or agreements, or through special acts of congress. This service commenced in 1907 with an appropriation of \$25,000; since that time the beneficial effect of this work has become so apparent that \$100,000 was appropriated for the last fiscal year.

"The liquor evil is recognized as one of the greatest confronting the Indian today, not only because of its demoralizing influence, but for the further and very important reason that it makes him an easy prey to the unscrupulous. There are many instances where, when under the influence of liquor, the Indian has been induced to convey his property without consideration. My coming to Denver for this conference is that we may more perfectly organize and systematize this work, for it is my firm purpose, with the use of good judgment, to aggressively undertake to carry out in good faith our treaty relationships in this respect, and so effectively use the funds appropriated by the congress as to insure the best results obtainable. It is my desire to cooperate with the state and local authorities, and I am sure that the evil result of the liquor traffic among the Indians is a matter of grave concern to the white citizens of the country, both for the reason that they are properly interested in the uplift of the red man, and for the further reason that the impoverishment of the Indian means that he will ultimately become a charge upon the taxpayers of the several states."

In leaving for Oklahoma for the purpose of a conference with tribal attorneys, probate attorneys, field clerks, and county judges, Mr. Sells made the following statement regarding probate matters as they affect the Indian minors of the five civilized tribes:

"The Indian children of Oklahoma are the richest average children in the United States, however, it is a lamentable fact that they have less statutory protection there than in any other

state. In the forty counties in eastern Oklahoma there are now pending from 800 to 1,500 probate estates, about 85 per cent of which are Indian children's estates.

"I have recently discovered that it costs about 3 per cent to settle a white child's estate, and that it costs more than 20 per cent to settle the estate of an Indian boy or girl. This is the result of guardians having been appointed without regard to their equipment and the acceptance of bondsmen, many times wholly insolvent.

"Enormous fees have been charged by attorneys, and unconscionable fees by guardians, together with indefensible expenditures of their funds which has frequently resulted in the dissipation of their entire property.

"It is not an uncommon thing when an Indian child reaches his majority to find that his guardian has absconded, and that his bondsmen are wholly financially irresponsible. It is my determined intention to reform this indefensible condition, and to this end I have recently appointed a number of probate attorneys who will give their whole time under my direction to this work. I am now submitting a number of cases to the grand juries in Oklahoma looking towards the indictment and criminal prosecution of those who have embezzled their funds.

"Recently we secured a ruling from one of the courts of Oklahoma, holding a guardian and his bondsmen responsible where Indian children's lands have been sold for a grossly inadequate consideration. It is my great desire to cooperate with the state authorities and particularly with the county judges in effecting these results, and I have every reason to believe that this co-operation will be perfectly arranged and carried out."

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Secretary Redfield has received a report from the commissioner of navigation, who is the secretary of the American delegation to the international conference on safety of life at sea, in session in London, relative to procedure in the conference.

Preliminary meetings between the representatives of Great Britain, Germany and France were held in London last summer and the delegations of these three powers were already aware of the main points on which they could agree and on which they differed. The United States, although invited, was not represented at these preliminary meetings, but the investigations and reports on subjects to be considered by the conference of the committees organized last spring by Secretary Redfield relieved the American delegates of a serious handicap and enabled them to reach conclusions in less than half the time which would otherwise have been required. The attitude of the United States was determined by a discussion of these reports in a series of delegation meetings.

When the conference first met on November 12, 1913, it was expected that the work would be completed in six weeks. Such was not the case, however, although at the time the report was written adjournment was expected by January 20, 1914.

The conference was at once divided into six committees which, up to December 19, held fully one hundred meetings to consider the various subjects relating to safety in marine travel. The American delegation was especially strong in practical seamanship, seven of its ten members having had years of experience and having reputations as prudent and trustworthy seamen. Six of the British delegation of thirteen are seamen of national or international reputation and on matters of practical sailor work and life the American and British delegations stood together, wielding a powerful influence although each nation, regardless of its individual representation, had only one vote in the conference and one vote in each committee.

The official language of the conference, as of all international conferences, was French, but, through the courtesy of British chairmen, many of the committee proceedings were in English. The convention and final report, which will comprise between 60 and 70 large printed pages, will be in French.

In order that the condition of seamen employed in the oyster fleet on Chesapeake Bay, especially during the months of January and February when the weather is worst, might be supervised closely, arrangements were made with the bureau of fisheries of the department for transportation facilities on the steamer Fish Hawk and her motor tenders for an inspector for that purpose. As the work of the steamboat-in-