

INDIANS ON INCREASE CENSUS BY ARCHAEOLOGIST REVEALS

Contrary to widely circulated reports that the "American Indian is dying off at an alarming rate in the great southwest", the Pueblos and other Indian populations are holding their own and increasing at a rate nearly as high as that shown by census figures for the white population.

Dr. Edgar L. Hewett, director of the School for American Research of the Archaeological Institute of American at Santa Fe, New Mexico, has transmitted to the American Association for the Advancement of Science a report of a census just made that shows that in the last decade the population of Pueblo villages has increased 22.2 per cent. and now totals to 10,565. Only one Pueblo showed a decrease, and that was due to an influenza epidemic a few years ago.

During the same period the entire population of the United States increased 39 per cent., part of which was due to immigration. These figures Dr. Hewett considers adequate refutation of the general idea that there has been a "startling decrease in our primitive population."

"On the question of the Indian ceremonies, also, much emotion has been wasted," Dr. Hewett said. "They are vital in the life of the Indians. They are highly aesthetic in character, and are not attended by as immoral consequences as are the social dances of the whites. Nor are the ceremonies dying out or are they likely to. On the contrary ceremonies that had disappeared are being revived every year and the Indians are preserving their own self-respect by cherishing their native culture which has in it elements of nobilityworthy of any race. There is no religious persecution of the Pueblos, no effort is being made to suppress their dances unless pernicious features crop out, and in such cases the Indians are more amenable to advice than are the youth of our own race."

Recently published statements claiming an appalling prevalence of disease among the Indians are declared by Dr. Hewett to be misleading. A recent survey shows that venereal disease is only about as common among the Indians as among their white neighbors, and if compared with the colored population of the South the Indians are much the cleaner race. While trachoma is considered by Dr. Hewett to be the most serious disease among the Indians, he declared statements that "thousands of Indians are going blind from trachoma" are exaggerations. Much trachoma, mostly in the curable stage, has been discovered among the Indians, and government physicians are now engaged in an active campaign to wipe it out.

The question of titles to Pueblo lands is being adjusted by a lands board established by Congress, Dr. Hewett said in urging that appeals for money to bring in more lawyers should be ignored by those who have the interests of the Pueblos at heart.

"With the government's present Indian policy, liberal Congressional appropriations and many friendly societies and individuals, the future of the Pueblo Indians is fairly well assured," Dr. Hewett declared. "There is however, always danger of 'too much white man's medicine'. It is what he does for himself that makes for his future character and progress."

The U. S. Government is planning the exploration and survey of the Great Salt Lake Desert in Utah, one of the largest unsurveyed areas in the public domain.
