

Land Sales
17132-22

F I P

JUN 25 1922

Mr. Carl N. Hill, Attorney,
Madison, Wisconsin.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of June 8, 1922, comes before me on my return from an absence in the field. I note, with regret, the conditions under which many of the Oneida Indians labor. The Oneida allotments were made under the provisions of the Act of August 8, 1887, (24 Stat. 389), under which trust patents were issued declaring that the United States would hold the lands in trust for the benefit of the Indian or his heirs for a period of twenty-five years; and that at the expiration of that period, the President might, should he deem it to the interest of any of such Indians, continue the trust.

The Oneida Indians have always been considered among the more enlightened tribes. Even before allotment, they had the advantage of instruction from missionaries, and rather intensive educational facilities have been supplied them during the whole of the trust period. Many were educated in non-reservation schools, and had the privilege of learning farming and mechanical industries, so that all who wished to retain the lands for farming purposes had certainly an opportunity, through observation and actual experience, to become reasonably successful farmers.

As the end of the twenty-five year period approached, delegations from the tribe appeared in this Office and argued, some for a withdrawal of further Government supervision, and others for a longer period of supervision. Those who wished an extension of the trust period based their request principally upon the fact that they wished to escape taxation. It is understood that public schools are within easy reach of most of the Oneida children. To those who are not so situated, the Government Boarding Schools at other points are still open.

Original Copy not filed

so all allotments one year to give more time for a working out of details. At the end of that year the period was extended on a small number for nine years longer, to protect invalids, minors or aged persons, and those obviously noncompetent.

At all times since June, 1918, Superintendent Edgar A. Allen, at Washena, Wisconsin, has been ready to advise any Indian who would write him, or who would call upon the financial clerk which this Office retained at Ouster. All understood that these persons were accessible, but few applied for advice. This Office is now informed that many have lost their lands through decrees in the local courts, based on actions brought by purchasers of undivided interests. As to the legality of these decrees and sales, we have made some investigations with the result that no legal fault could be found with them other than, as incident to all forced sales, the lands brought lower prices than the owners expected.

Concerning losses through tax sales, the Indians were advised to pay the taxes accrued since supervision ceased.

For your information there is enclosed a copy of a letter addressed today to Superintendent Allen.

Thanking you for your interest in the matter, I am,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Chas. M. Burke

Commissioner.