Excerpts from Paper Read at Kansas City Conference by Robert Hamilton

The question has been asked time and again by all classes of people, including the Indian himself, what prompted the native of this country to organize The Society of American Indians.

Second question is, "does the Society receive recognition by the Indians, whether actual members or not, and does it entail enough membership to establish a national scope of its existence?"

I wish to answer these questions through the columns of your paper, as a medium of its conveyance to the public.

In reply to the first question, I desire to state that the Society of American Indians was organized at Ohio State University, April 1, 1911, because the philanthropic people saw that the welfare and interests of the Indians had been honestly, considerably, conservatively and economically administered for the good of the race, prompted the educated Indian, so many Indians as possible into a convention to devise ways and means to organize a national Society of American Indians, to institute a national plea for justice and a square deal, and therefore, it was so dedicated to such a worthy cause, because it was, and is more evident that the employed policies of the Indian Affairs are guilty of breach of trust to which has become a common practice, and it is obvious that the government, through "the system administering Indian" is not only repugnant to American principles, but inimical to the Indian's constitutional rights to liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness, protection of vested property rights, opportunity to develop vocational ambitions as well as mental and spiritual interests.

When Congress vested the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of their vested property rights without consent of the Indians, Congress intuited that the quality of the guardianship should be equal to the personal discriminatory judgment of such executives upon the conclusive presumption that their ability and Christian compassion assured a righteous adjudication.

But since the administrative officers have formulated new organs and un-American-like policies, it became necessary, "in the course of human events" for the enlightened Indians to organize themselves into a Society to devise a united effort to enforce laws, moral principles, and to institute legal proceedings in the proper tribunals to adjudicate the wrongs committed against the Indians' property and constitutional rights.

The charter membership of this Society also realized that the appropriation of Indian funds by congressional enactment without the consent of the Indians and the primitive and marauders to interpret the taxations and confiscation of Indian property which is equivalent to "a taxation without representation," which caused revolutionary war against the King of England, who was acting as a self-constituted guardian and trustee over the property of the colonies. If it were wrong for the King to confiscate the property of the colonies and to deprive them of the voice in administration of their affairs, it is equally abominable for the bureaucrats to assume that attitude toward the natives.

The essential qualifications of the officers of the Society should be men of unwavering honesty, unimpeachably industrious, supremely dedicated to service to their race and the whole country, intensely human, courageously patriotic, and unlimited patience.

He said officers performed their duties to the best of their ability and integrity, and governed by what they consciously believe to be right and proper for the race.

The next question is the general recognition of this Society: The Indians of this country, when they answer to this question is plain and clear, in the affirmative. Active, Indian Associate, Associate, Junior and Honorary members who pay membership fees, and in some instances donate to meet the current expenses of this Society, and especially to maintain an office with necessary officers in Washington, D. C. Every intelligent Indian who has a comprehensive conception of the relationship of the Indian with the United States Government, not only recognizes and encourages the existence of this Society, but depend upon it for redress of grievances.

After a careful, diligent and extensive investigation into the whole machinery of the System and Combinations, The Society finds that laws enacted to advance the Indians in civilization; to recognize vestigial rights; to assure his future prosperity have been grossly violated by the officials in charge of the Indian affairs.

It is the System, which every Indian objected, and resented the grafters and arbitrary Octopus who manipulate and operate Indian property to the detriment of the Indian, but not to Uncle Sam's good and form of government, and fomented resentment and breed.

The public has been and is being deceived by false and mis-leading statements given to the press with official sanction. It is not difficult to discover why such is so and the method by which the public is misled into believing that the interests are safeguarded, the natural resources are conserved, developed and commercialized for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Indian.

As soon as the Indian felt the firm attitude of the officers of the Society towards the grafters and Indian Office despoits, the employees under the Bureau began to make a systematic propaganda to weaken this organization, forbidden to recover, denied the right to a defense, fines in law, drained of every atom of its economic strength to satisfy the revenge of men, to keep him dis-united and nominally respected and browed.

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Let not the Bureaucrats make you believe that $400,000,000,000 appropriated by Congress for the Indians was a liberal expenditure of Government funds to educate and employ them in education and civilization of the natives since 1832 when the Indian labor was used to pay their debts and expenses. It was a new idea to the Filipinos and to the other Pacific islands in those far-off days. The term "Indians" is a foreign word, borrowed from the language of the Englishmen. This self-appointed guardianship of the Indians appears very suspicious. It would seem to them that they were being taken advantage of. The Indian Bureau is a detrimental to humanity, and a mockery to God. Its existence is a dark patched land. This is not true. There is no averse sentiment in the mind of the Indian race, there was a wave of public sentiment in behalf of the Indian people. Good people in New York, Philadelphia, co-operated and supported the newly-formed Indian Rights' Association. The Indian Bureau will not take away their rights in mistreatment by the Government.

Provisional white men and women were much interested in the Association, and contributed to it generously. The Association devoted itself to the promotion of the Indian people in every state and territory. They have been freely credited to the Indian Bureau.

Equality doesn't mean rounding-up how the Apache people. They have gone out into the world and followed in the same footsteps as the white race; they would have been the same had they been educated. These Indians are no more. Such false and poisonous falsehoods, that rings of freedom, that rings of salvation, that rings the light.
Improving does not tear the barriers down and free the Indian.

Here comes another: Doctor, you are cruel, and inconsiderate for your art, and free the Indian.

Your art, which has been the great contribution to civilization. He is a born artist. As has been said, let the white man with the Indian-Bureau does not mean anything.

The Indian Bureau lives and thrives by the keeping the Indian in slavery and as wards. Hon. Kelly of Pennsylvania, on the floor of the House says that the Indian Bureau System depends upon public sentiment, and I propose to do my part in making that sentiment act.

In the Indian Bureau is sustained by Congress. Congress appropriates Fifteen Million Dollars for the Indians, and the Indians do not get a smell of it; they do not appreciate it. They are shy to defend the Indian Bureau, and is it right to make paupers out of strong men and women?

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This is civilization anyway? What about it? Whether we are in a civilized country, or not by Indian showings and arts; it is not by Indian songs and art; it is not by digging into his heart, and hidden and their ideas. These are the things of the past, and the Indians have no use for them. The Indian is not a fighter, but a fighter for freedom and citizenship. The blockade that stands between the Indian people and their freedom and citizenship is by the Indian Bureau. The Indian Bureau lives and thrives by the keeping the Indian in slavery and as wards.

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