

PROSPEROUS OREGON INDIANS.

The Training School and Reservations in a Flourishing Condition.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6. — [OREGONIAN office, 511 Fourteenth street.]—R. V. Belt, assistant commissioner of Indian affairs, has recently returned from an extended trip to the Pacific coast. He returned by way of the Pacific Northwest and visited a number of Indian agencies in that section, more especially in Oregon and Idaho. He speaks in the highest terms of the Indian school at Salem and says that it is in a far better condition than when visited by him two years ago. Mr. Belt says:

"The pupils are contented and happy; the farm is well cultivated and the other industries are fairly well attended to. Two years ago, when I was there, I could not walk across the campus or sit anywhere about the grounds for a moment without being waited upon by a delegation of pupils with some complaints, usually winding up with urgent requests to be allowed to go home, because of their dissatisfaction with the school. The only delegation coming to me at this time was one boy, who came up smiling, and extending his hand, said: 'I remember your visit here two years ago. I was one of the boys wanting to go home. You talked to me kindly, told me I ought to stay here, be contented, learn all I could and especially how to work, so that I could live like a white man. I went away sad, but thinking the matter over, next morning asked the superintendent to put me at work where I could learn something. He put me in the bakery,' and with a broad smile upon his face he said: 'Now I am baker of this school.' The superintendent of the school informed me that he was very faithful and efficient, never neglecting his work for anything. There is still room for improvement in the work for this school, but it is believed that its present management will make it more successful than in the past."

He next visited the Umatilla agency, in Eastern Oregon, and reports that the Indians of that agency are prosperous, though not very industrious. Their reservation is a beautiful and bountiful grain-producing tract of country. Over 50,000 acres of it are in grain this year, and though affected by a hot spell in July, will yield over 1,250,000 bushels of fine grain. The average yield in favorable seasons is near 50 bushels per acre. Some of this grain is produced by Indian labor, but the greater portion of it is raised by whites who rent the lands from the Indians. On this reservation he saw the first combined steam hounding, threshing, fanning and bagging machine, operating in a large wheat field, where it threshed, fanned and bagged on an average from 60 to 75 acres of wheat per day with the help of about seven men, excluding those who gathered up the sacked grain. The greatest manual labor performed in connection with this method of harvesting seemed to be that of the laborers who gathered the bags and lifted them into the wagons. A few of the older Indians have heretofore controlled and largely squandered the profits from these immense harvests. This, however, is now being broken up, as the lands have been allotted to the individual Indians, and the individual allottees are now collecting a rent of the land selected and allotted to them. This is considered an encouraging sign, as it shows that the individuals are asserting their rights and becoming interested in individual interests.

The renting of land by the able-bodied allottees is not permitted by law, though