

EARLE REPORT SAYS INDIANS NOT SUITABLE AS CITIZENS

THE LATEST count of the Indians of Massachusetts has just been released. Commissioner John Milton Earle compiled the census and presented a report to the Governor's Council, *writes our staff reporter, Josiah Neesmuhsnoonash, April 15, 1861.*

Responsibility for Indian tribes rests with the state. That means their numbers must be recorded, along with their social and living conditions. White overseers of Indian lands often allow non-Indians to graze sheep, cut from woodlots, or even build homes on Indian lands. However, Indian people say they want their allotted lands protected, allowing them to farm, hunt, and fish as they always have: "We still know the forests and the ancient roads and take heart in our remaining communities living throughout our old homelands," said a representative.

The report details 1,126 people

in 291 families, including each person's name, age, tribe, gender, occupation, place of residence, number of livestock, and amount of land owned.

However, those who roam from place to place, following old seasonal moves, do not get included in the count. The officials who compile the report are also free to decide who is Indian, judging a person's looks or skin color, rather than studying their family information or kinship.

The purpose of the report was to decide whether Indian people are ready to be granted full citizenship, giving them the same legal status as whites.

Earle concludes that Indians are not ready. "The disabilities under which we have placed them ... have perpetuated their unfitness to bear the burdens of citizenship. The history of all conquered ... races ... illustrates the impossibility of elevating such races. ..."



COMMERCIAL whaling in Massachusetts dates back to the 17th century, though Native Americans hunted whales long before and were in much demand by sea captains for their skills and expertise. As the industry flourished, immigrants from the Azores and Cape Verde settled in New Bedford. The hunt for whales was brilliantly captured in Herman Melville's classic 1851 novel *Moby Dick*; or, *The Whale*, with early scenes set in New Bedford and Nantucket.