

# Three Views on Indian Policy

**From a speech of Chief Red Cloud in New York on July 16, 1870**

When you first came we were very many, and you were few; now you are many, and we are getting very few, and we are poor. You are here told that we are traders and thieves, and it is not so. We have given you nearly all our lands, and if we had any more land to give we would be very glad to give it...

At the mouth of Horse Creek, in 1852, the Great Father made a treaty with us by which we agreed to let all that country open for fifty-five years for the transit of those who were going through. We kept this treaty; we never treated any man wrong; we never committed any murder or depredation until after the troops were sent into that country, and the troops killed our people and ill-treated them, and thus war and trouble arose...

I have sent a great many words to the Great Father, but I don't know that they ever reach the Great Father. The words would never come to him, so I thought I would come and tell you myself.

**Adapted from *The Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, 1873, pages 391-401***

If they—the Indians—stand up against the progress of civilization and industry, they must be relentlessly crushed. The westward course of population is neither to be denied nor delayed for the sake of all the Indians that ever called this country their home. They must yield or perish...

Whenever the time shall come that the roving tribes are reduced to a condition of complete dependence and submission, the plan to be adopted in dealing with them must be substantially that which is now being pursued in the case of the more tractable and friendly Indians.

**Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West, Vol. 1, New York, 1910, Appendix A***

To recognize the Indian ownership of the limitless prairies and forests of this continent—that is, to consider the dozen squalid savages who hunted at long intervals over a territory of 1,000 square miles as owning it outright—necessarily implies a similar recognition of the claims of every white hunter, squatter, horse thief, or wandering cattleman...

In fact, the mere statement of the case is sufficient to show the absurdity of asserting that the land really belonged to the Indians. The different tribes have always been utterly unable to define their own boundaries... Their claims all conflicted with one another... They were always willing to sell land to which they have merely the vaguest title.