

of his differing culture. Since attitudes present on the western frontier clearly ruled out toleration of Indian culture, the criteria then for the judgment of the federal Indian policy should be based upon the success or failure of the Indians to adjust to the problems of the ownership of private property.

h- A superficial analysis might show that the federal government between 1887 and 1907 did protect the rights of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, for title of the Indian land was retained without encumbrances,²⁷ a leasing policy was adopted which contributed money to the Indians' support,²⁸ and local taxation was minimized by rulings of the Interior Department.²⁹ As a citizen of the United States after accepting land in severalty, the Indian had recourse to the courts for redress of his grievances, and as a citizen of Oklahoma Territory his right to vote could be used to protect his social and political privileges.³⁰ Yet, as we view this twenty year period, our judgment must be that the Indian policy of the federal government failed when applied to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes.

Of tremendous significance to the Indian was the retention, protection, continued control and utilization of the allotted land. As long as the land was held in trust by the government, it could not be encumbered or alienated. Inroads, however, were made on the Indian land. With few exceptions, the Cheyennes and Arapahoes did not possess either the ability or the resources necessary to cultivate the lands of the family unit which averaged about eight hundred acres. At best by 1892 the Indians had planted small vegetable patches and a few acres of corn.³¹ Thus, most of the Indian lands would lie idle unless opened to White men for farming and grazing. After inspecting the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, J. M. Lee, an army officer and ex-Cheyenne and Arapaho agent, predicted that reduction of the Indian land would be demanded unless it was opened to White use.³²

Early in 1891, Congress enacted a statute which permitted the leasing of Indian lands, thereby opening them to the farmer and cattleman. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs interpreted this law closely and would not permit indiscriminate leasing. Indians