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The American Indian set an all-time record this past year in accepting job opportunities off his reservation, Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis announced today. According to figures received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, almost 3,500 Indians moved away from their reservation homes to areas that offered greater employment advantages.

The figures go on to show that most of the Indians who make the voluntary relocation move make a success of their new ventures.

Of the 16 agencies where the Department has a relocation staff, five have reported on the number of "returnees" for fiscal 1955. These reports show that fewer than 13 of every 100 relocates give up and go back to their reservations after trying life in the cities.

One of the best records was posted by 455 relocatees from the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma. Of the number that moved away, only seven per cent returned. The percentage is the same for 229 Indians from Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana.

At the 16 agencies where the Department has relocation officers, their job is to give the Indians interested in relocation the facts as to what the move might mean to them and. their families. The average size of a relocated family is 39. However, about 800 of the 3,500 Indians who relocated were single men and women. Indians who seek relocation are generally the younger members of the tribe--those 45 or under.

On the "receiving end" of the relocation process started at the agency offices, the Department has additional offices in Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago which help the Indian find work and adequate housing, and assist him in making a satisfactory adjustment to city life. In most cases, the Department pays the Indian's expenses to make the move and get settled, and urges him to obtain proper health and hospital insurance.

Indians, unusually adopt with their hands, are making good employment records in automotive, airplane, and electronic fields.