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Cash income from Indian-owned forests in the United States has trebled in the last decade and the interest of Indian tribes and individual Indians in the scientific management of their woodland assets has greatly increased during the same period, the Department of the Interior reported today.

The 6,600,000 acres of commercially valuable forestland under supervision of the Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs have been managed since 1910 on a “sustained yield basis”, designed to balance the cutting of old trees by the growth of new trees in line with highest conservation standards. But surveys recently made show that many inventories and management plans adopted several decades ago are now obsolete and that annual maximum logging figures can be safely raised.

Partly because of these increases in cut limitations and partly because of rises in lumber prices, annual cash receipts from all Indian forests (except the Klamath reservation in Oregon) have soared from $2,500,000 in the calendar year 1948 to approximately $8,500,000 in 1957. (Klamath figures, although substantial, are omitted because they have fluctuated widely in recent years due to special circumstances occasioned by pending termination of Federal trusteeship of the tribe's affairs.)

Comparable figures for recent years are:

YEAR	VOLUME CUT (Board Feet)	CASH RECEIPTS	AVERAGE PRICE per 1000 board ft
1953	504,640,000	$7,262,902	$14.39
1954	476,075,000	7,246,012	15.24
1955	581,015,000	8,659,332	14.90
1956	507,548,000	9,759,034	19.23
1957	433,347,000	8,501,266	19.62

Although the totals of timber cut declined in the last two years, because of a slackened demand for lumber, the average price remained high, with the result that cash receipts did not slump so severely. All cash receipts go to the Indian owners except for a 10 percent management charge which the Federal Government makes when it arranges and controls the stumpage sales. The charge covers in whole or in part the costs of timber sales and general forest administration.

Most of the new forest inventories, in which aerial photography plays an important and expensive part, have been financed by the Indian tribes themselves. Since 1953 more than two thirds of the Indians 1 major forests have been resurveyed and the task is continuing. Among inventories which have been completed or are nearing completion are those on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico and Arizona, the Hoopa Valley and Tule River reservations in California, the Fort Apache and San Carlos reservations in Arizona, the Jicarilla in New Mexico, the Northern Cheyenne in Montana, the Klamath and Warm Springs in Oregon, the Yakima and Colville-Spokane in Washington, the Red Lake in Minnesota and the Menominee in Wisconsin. Softwoods or conifers predominate in the Northwest and Southwest, with ponderosa pine being the principal tree harvested. In the Lake states of Wisconsin and Minnesota hardwoods provide the chief product, with oak, maple, birch and beech prevailing.

The value of the new inventories may be seen in the case of the Navajo reservation. Until about four years ago logging operations by the Navajo tribal sawmill had been held to a cut of about 13,000,000 board feet a year because facts then available indicated that this was the maximum allowable under sustained yield management. The new inventory, completed in 1954, indicates that the annual cut may be increased to 34,000,000 feet, and even to 49 million feet for the next few years. Actual experience under such a rate of cutting will demonstrate what modifications, if any, of annual cut may become desirable. Plans for utilizing this increased allowance are being actively developed by the Tribe in consultation with the Bureau.

In addition to voting funds for new inventories, most of the forest-owning tribes have shown increased interest in their valuable resources in other ways as well. Tribal officers now usually take an active part in planning logging and reforestation programs, reviewing proposed contracts, and in the administration of active timber sales. Tribal sawmill enterprises have long been operated by the Menominee Indians in Wisconsin, the Red Lake in Minnesota and the Navajo in the Southwest. A few individual Indians are now operating as loggers or running sawmills of their own. An important factor in the harvesting of Indian timber as carried on today has been the almost complete replacement of the railroad by the heavy-duty logging truck, which permits much greater flexibility in logging operations.

But the two ancient enemies of the forest, fire and infestation or disease, persist. In its battle against the latter the Bureau of Indian Affairs depends largely on the research and experimental activities of the Forestry Service of the Department of Agriculture. In recent years the Bureau, with such assistance, has been combatting the southern pine beetle on the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina, the walking stick insect on the Menominee reservation, the Black Hills beetle on the Navajo, and the white pine blister rust in the Lake states area. One objective of selective cutting operations is to remove the trees that are most susceptible to insect and disease infestations. All Indian reservations maintain, of course, continuous provisions for the prevention and suppression of forest fires.