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For Immediate Release: September 16, 1959
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Sales of timber from lands belonging to Indian tribes and individual Indians brought the owners an income of $10,937,485 in the fiscal year 1959, or 17 percent more than the amount in 1958, Acting Secretary of the Interior Elmer F. Bennett announced today.

The volume of timber cut under contract on Indian lands was 551 million board feet, an increase of 98 million board feet over the 1958 total.

Sawmills owned by three Indian tribal groups--the Menominee of Wisconsin, the Red Lake Chippewa of Minnesota, and the Navajo of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah-- converted to lumber about 40 million board feet of the total cut. Besides producing a profit for the tribal organizations, these mills also furnish employment for the resident Indians, Mr. Bennett pointed out.

Over the country as whole, there are about 6,500,000 acres of commercially valuable Indian timberland, Mr. Bennett explained. Eighty-three percent is owned by tribal groups and the balance by individual Indians. Ponderosa pine is the predominant species.

Cutting is concentrated on the mature and over mature trees which are susceptible to mortality from insect attacks, disease and old age. Their removal leaves vigorous young stands with fine growth potential.

Over the past 50 years about half of the commercially valuable Indian timber has been improved by such selective cutting under sustained yield management. Recent inventories indicate that the yearly cut can safely be increased on a substantial portion of the remaining timberlands.