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OFFICE OF  
INDIAN AFFAIRS  
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Capt. R. H. Pratt  
Carlisle School  
April 27, 1885

Special report on  
Indian School sys-  
tem, with suggest-  
ions for improvement.

~~File~~

No 17/28

Miss Cook

6076

U. S.

Indian Industrial School,

Carlisle, Pa., Apr. 27 1885

Hon. Jno. D. C. Atkins,

Commr. of Indian Affairs,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I beg to present the following with a view to improvement of Indian School work -

Our Indian School Systems are caring for less than twenty-five per cent of Indian youth of school age. From most of the tribes those in the schools are not a fair average of the youth either in health or character; for Indian communities are like white communities in their willingness to get rid of incompetents. My experience has been that they put forward their unhealthy and unmanageable children first. It has always seemed to me of the greatest importance that the school systems

should be speedily enlarged to reach all the children, for if we with difficulty keep civilized by making school provision for all our children, how can we hope to do the greater work of lifting up these Indian peoples, except we make at least as ample provision for them. It is self evident, that while we provide for less than the whole, we should, if possible, secure the best, and not allow the schools to dwindle into mere hospitals and reformatories, leaving the great mass to more freely march on in the enjoyment of their ignorance and savagery.

Another great disadvantage under which our school effort labors, is the fact that at the agencies and schools falling more directly under the control of the Indians, there is more or less change in attendance - some going out

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and others coming in to take their place even during School Sessions, but more especially at the period of reorganizing yearly. One year there will be one lot of Children in School; the next year many of that lot will remain in camp and a new lot be taken in. Of course, where progress is difficult under the best surroundings and most prolonged effort, these influences very greatly nullify the progress that might be made, were attendance more regular and prolonged.

To counteract these evils I would suggest that a census of all Children of School age be made, giving the names, ages, apparent mental and physical qualifications, and an account of previous attendance at School. One copy of this to be filed in the Department at Washington, the other to remain in the

hands of the Agent; and, as the Government is the proper Guardian, I believe it would be perfectly consistent for the Department when ordering Children into Schools from any Agency, - whether into Agency Schools, or Schools remote from Agencies, - to select from the list those Children apparently the best material for the Schools, and to instruct the Agent to send such and such Children, giving their names.

I am aware that there will be difficulty at some Agencies; but to my mind it is practicable, and there are no difficulties that cannot be overcome.

In addition to this a periodical muster of the Children in each School - whether Agency or remote, and on Forms something like our Army Muster Rolls would fix identity, and lead to that

effort upon individual youth without  
which there is more or less of failure.

This muster should cover their progress,  
health conditions &c. These might be  
made bi-monthly or quarterly. In  
the Remarks should be shown the  
absences, and at the end of the roll  
could be shown the deaths, discharges,  
dismissals &c., with reasons.

Very respectfully  
Your Obedt. Servt.

R. H. Pratt

Capt. 102<sup>nd</sup> (Inf.)  
Supt.