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OFFICE OF
INDIAN AFFAIRS
Rec'd. OCT 15

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R. H. Pratt

Carlisle School,

Sept. 13, 1886.

Reply to letter of 6"
inst. rel. to sending
our instructors from
pupils of the Carlisle
School. for Fort Ste.
Vinson Dak.

Copy of letter encl. Dupl. Scott Oct 18/86
Filed.

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U. S.

Indian Industrial School,

Carlisle, Pa. Sept. 13th 1886.

Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington D. C.

Sir,

Replying to your letter of the 6th inst. in relation to Blacksmith, Harness Making and Sewing Room instructors for the Fort Stevenson Dak. School from the pupils of this School and asking my opinion as to the policy of placing the graduates of this and other Indian Schools in such positions, I must inform you that while I have repeatedly in obedience to the wishes of the Department sent out pupils to the Training and Agency Schools to fill Mechanical and other places I have never thought the system a good one. Mr. Teller when Secretary, wrote me directly about this matter and I replied against it.

My reasons are; we seldom or never carry our pupils through to a sufficient knowledge of either trades or a system of teaching to enable them to act as successful instructors. Among our own mechanics not one in

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five of those regularly trained and graduated from the apprentice systems of the Country are capable of giving the instruction necessary in our Indian Industrial Schools. They lack in natural intelligence, tact and disposition and the power to impart that which they may know, and, ^{many} would fail because of bad habits and character; still as the number of mechanics is large, and the field of selection great, it is practicable to obtain such instructors.

It must be remembered that our whole Indian School system is without organization, no point for graduation has been established, neither are there periods strictly adhered to, nor grades. Every School has to shift for itself, and in the matter of pupils and instructors, there is one constant round of change. The indirectness of all this effort naturally prevents the gain that might be made under better organization. ~~That~~ the Government would assume the paternal direction it should assume as guardian of the Indians and organize and adhere to systematic education

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and training has been my hope from the beginning.

The ~~most~~ advanced apprentices we have ~~now~~ under training have had about four years experience. Working half days as we do, this would give them about two years of trade instruction. While they could ~~do~~ many parts of their work well in performing the more manual labor required they would not be competent to teach other young Indians successfully. They could ~~not~~ be able to advise the Superintendent of the School as certainly as they should what material in quality and quantity they require and having no general experience they could not meet well the issues of ~~any new or different~~ lines of work beyond those they have been instructed in at Carlisle.

It is as difficult to teach young Indians in any direction as it is to teach Whites and our Indian Schools should have competent instructors everywhere or else we must expect proportionate failure. My recommendation is that for all these Schools

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the Department secure competent instructors for all the departments, mechanical as well as literary and not trust our school work to mere hacks or incompetents, whether Indian or Anglo Saxon.

Notwithstanding these views if the Department desires it, I will send to Supt. Scatt the very best students I can to accomplish his purposes.

Your letter states that a communication from Geo. W. Scatt, Supt. Ft. Stevenson School was enclosed. No such letter accompanied yours.

Very Respectfully

Your obedient servant,

R. H. Pratt

Capt. & Supt.