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OFFICE OF
Indian Affairs

Rec'd JAN 28

1897

47/170

Int. Dept.

Jan. 27, 1897.

Forwards copy of letter
from Capt. R. H. Pratt
rel. to charges made
against him, with copy of
letter from Sec. of Int, rel.
to same, for file in this
office.

map & 2 inc.

File ✓

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D

Department of the Interior,

SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Jan. 27, '99

Dear Mr. Smith:

I send you
herewith copy of
Capt. Pratt's letter
& the Secretary's,
for the files of
your office.

J. W. Holcomb

3890

INDIAN OFFICE,

Incl. No. /

1897

Int Dept.

Jan 27/97

Forwards copy of
letter from Capt
R. H. Pratt rel. to
charges made against
him with copy of
letter from Sec. of
Int. rel. to same, for
file in this office

EG

connected, I am,

Very respectfully,

David H. Francis,

Secretary.

Copy.

R.B.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

WASHINGTON, November 16, 1896.

2890

Capt. R. H. Pratt,

Supt. U.S. Indian Schools,

Carlisle, Penna.

Sir:

I am in receipt of yours of the 14th instant, giving reasons for your failure to renominate Miss Silcott and Miss Mosher as teachers for the year 1896-7 in the Indian School at Carlisle, Pa., and have forwarded same to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I have also addressed a communication to the Commissioner declining to comply with the recommendation of his office to request the Honorable Secretary of War to recall your detail for duty in the Indian School Service, and have given my reasons for such declination. I have assured the Commissioner that while I did not consider you blameless, for failing to give your reasons for refusing to renominate Miss Silcott and Miss Mosher, I thought the offense not sufficient to justify your being relieved from the detail to which you have been assigned for seventeen years.

I take this occasion in writing to call your attention to the requirements of the Civil Service rules, as I did verbally, so that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in the selection,

transfer or dismissal of teachers, may act intelligently in accordance therewith. It is not necessary that an army officer of long experience like yourself should be reminded of the duty and respect due to superior officers.

Trusting there will be no further lack of harmony between yourself and the officers of the Bureau with which you are connected, I am,

Very respectfully,

David R. Francis,

Secretary.

Superintendent.

Capt. John Caw, V., U.S.A.,

N.

(Dictated)

Your obedient servant,

Respect,

Aside the judgment thereof, I submit my case, and am with great
any tribunal, court-martial, court of inquiry or other, and to
ready to meet every particular and direct charge against me before
government trust in my keeping, and with the declaration that I am
have acted as I believe for the best interests of the important

With this statement of my case and the consciousness that I
expression by saying, the irregular course pursued there.

the course pursued there, - and I think I ought to emphasize the
other management of the Indian Office, I have been goaded to it by
stand for my rights and to in any way seem to reflect upon his or
him in the Indian Office that wherever I have felt called upon to
opportunity to show and prove by Mr. Smith himself and those about
when he placed that expression in his letter, and to have the
tant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs) may have had in mind
able Secretary know every fact in every case, which he (the Assis-
say that it would be a great satisfaction to me to have the Honor-
office, I (he) would hesitate, etc." In regard to that, I have to
in the way of disregard and disrespect for the authority of this

INDIAN OFFICE,

Ind. No.

3890

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1897

Carlisle, Pa., October 6th 1896.

Honorable Emmett Womack,
Chief Clerk, Dept. of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:-

In compliance with your letter of the 30th of September, advising that the Honorable Secretary of the Interior directs me to make such answer in writing in the way of defense as may seem proper to the letter of Thos. P. Smith, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated September 10th, I have to respectfully advise you that it is so barren of administrative poise and so full of personal feeling, that my official sense suggests I let my case rest entirely upon the letter of the Acting Commissioner. I do not adopt this course, however, because it might seem unthankful for the fairness of the Honorable Secretary in affording me this opportunity to answer.

Taking it for granted that the letters submitted to the Honorable Secretary with the said letter of the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs comprise the whole of the correspondence, including the letters between myself and the Superintendent of Indian Schools, I will add by way of explanation that last spring I informed the Superintendent of Indian Schools verbally of my desire to have the School relieved of the services of the two teachers, Miss Mosher and Miss Silcott, and I understood him then that he had use for them elsewhere and would transfer them. At the close of the

fiscal year the correspondence will show that I reminded the Superintendent of Indian Schools of this verbal information. I also in writing informed the two teachers above referred to, of my expressions to the Superintendent of Indian Schools. My experiences for several years back had led me to determine that I would not again attempt to relieve the School of unsatisfactory employes through making formal reports against them, and this determination was known to the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Superintendent of Indian Schools.

I visited Washington late in July last to find out why my full list of nominations of employes for the current fiscal year had not been confirmed, and the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs told me that it was the intention of the Department always to confirm my nominations and approve of my proposals for changes. The Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs will remember this conversation from the fact that he called in Captain Dortch, the Chief of the Educational Division, who confirmed this position. I especially spoke to the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs of my desire to have the School relieved of the two teachers above referred to, and told him that I would not make formal complaints against them, and explained why I did not care to do so.

The Superintendent of Indian Schools did not advise me of the transfer of the two employes named, and inasmuch as they were entitled to leaves of absence, pay for which should come from the Carlisle appropriation, and as I could only properly pay them on the regular roll, I renominated them so that I could pay them and that also they might be in a position for the Department to transfer or promote, as explained in the correspondence.

The attention of the Honorable Secretary is invited to the fact that this matter is not taken up by the Superintendent of Indian Schools when the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs is present and in charge of the Office, but after the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs had gone west, and when the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs is in charge.

I believe that both through my notices to the Superintendent of Indian Schools and on the understanding had with the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the time Captain Dortch was called in, or on either of these, I had full reason to be relieved of the two employes.

It will be noted that it is in the correspondence of the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and not mine, that the thought of summarily putting the two teachers referred to out of the service is mentioned. I had no such expectation. My almost universal experience with the present Superintendent of Indian Schools warranted me in believing that they would be advanced in being sent elsewhere at a higher salary, so that whether I made statements against them or not, would have no special bearing upon the result, and I repeat that both the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Superintendent of Indian Schools knew that I had determined not to make any further statements against employes. If I committed offense in declining to give reasons, the offense was committed in the first act and was not specially aggravated by the persistency of the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs in demanding reasons. I did not reply to his last telegram because I felt it was not seemly to continue the bickering and I had no other reply to give further than the reiterated one already given.

The Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs says: "The ladies above referred to are regular Civil Service appointees, and were appoined to positions at Carlisle by the Indian Office." This is only half the truth. They were appointed to positions at Carlisle on my nomination, so it would seem as though I, as Superintendent, am a factor in guarding and guiding the appointments of employes at Carlisle. I am sure they would not have been appointed at Carlisle but for my action in nominating them. Though to secure removal, I made no charges against them, there was, of course, ample reason in my mind for concluding against their further services, and this was made plain to the Indian Office by me verbally and through letter correspondence and by my submitting a list of proposed changes in employes.

I will not discuss as to whether it is the right, or not, of the employe always to know why he or she is dismissed. The door that has been opened and so amply used for petty charges, spying and questionable investigation, and which has, as the records show, sent out of the school service more than three-fourths of the Civil Service school employes with salaries of \$600.00 and over since 1892, when the mantle of Civil Service protection was first thrown over the school service, is reason sufficient, outside of my own experience, for my not caring to join in the system. I make this statement to, in a measure, meet the smirching intended in the declaration as to the policy of protection against "the tyranny of superior officers."

If it shall be considered that I have offended in refusing to place Miss Silcott on duty when she reported, I have to respectfully state that to my mind the question of whether I was to be Superintendent and manager of this School in the future, as I have been

throughout the past seventeen years, was to be settled right at this point. The responsibility for the success or failure of this or any other Indian School does not rest with the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, but does rest on its Superintendent. To have accepted of Miss Silcott under the circumstances would have been most harmful to the discipline of the School and to my supremacy as its Superintendent. That my treatment of her at the time she reported was otherwise than gentlemanly and as forbearing and kindly as the circumstances would admit, I emphatically deny, and if Miss Silcott has written a letter, as intimated, to the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs using such language, she confirms and substantiates by that act the conclusions as to her worth I had formed by her previous acts, and the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs in using such language, whether inspired by Miss Silcott or originating with himself, decides his own fitness for administrative duties. The Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs well knows the legal method of eliminating Army officers guilty of such gross conduct.

Having been more than seventeen years in charge of this School, and being the suggestor, inaugurator, and builder of it, and by continuous service as its Superintendent in the open glare of close public and administrative scrutiny, and not hid away on some remote Indian reservation, and having placed it before the country as the most important School in the service and thus in a measure driven the whole Indian school service into more industrial, practical and commonsense lines, is full contradiction to such aspersions thrown upon me from any quarter.

The Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs closes his letter with the statement that "were this his (my) first offense

in the way of disregard and disrespect for the authority of this office, I (he) would hesitate, etc." In regard to that, I have to say that it would be a great satisfaction to me to have the Honorable Secretary know every fact in every case, which he (the Assistant and Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs) may have had in mind when he placed that expression in his letter, and to have the opportunity to show and prove by Mr. Smith himself and those about him in the Indian Office that wherever I have felt called upon to stand for my rights and to in any way seem to reflect upon his or other management of the Indian Office, I have been goaded to it by the course pursued there,- and I think I ought to emphasize the expression by saying, the irregular course pursued there.

With this statement of my case and the consciousness that I have acted as I believe for the best interests of the important Government trust in my keeping, and with the declaration that I am ready to meet every particular and direct charge against me before any tribunal, court-martial, court of inquiry or other, and to abide the judgment thereof, I submit my case, and am with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Dictated)
N.



Capt. 10th Cav'y., U.S.A.,
Superintendent.

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INDIAN OFFICE

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