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OFFICE OF
Indian Affairs
Rec. MAY 9

1903

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Indian Indus. School,

Carlisle, Pa. May 8, 1903.

Pratt, R. H.

col. & supt.

concerning Miss Koerner's
inefficiency as head of the
sewing department.

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Dec. 1. 1903

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Department of the Interior,

INDIAN SCHOOL SERVICE,

Carlisle, Penna. May 7, 1903.

To the Honorable,

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Miss Olga Koerner, appointed assistant seamstress at this school, by your letter of April 21, marked Education. 24510-24827- 1903, reported on Saturday last and began work on Monday.

Miss Koerner is a graduate of the St. Paul Park College, Minn. and for any work she can do, would be an acceptable employe in the Indian service, but she is entirely unable to fill the position here in which the United States Civil Service has placed her. She has no experience whatever in practical sewing beyond the making of some of her own clothing under her mother's direction. Her training was in the Agricultural School of Minnesota, where she took a course in sewing with the expectation of undertaking technical teaching of sewing in the Public Schools, but even in this she has had no experience.

Miss Koerner, as I am writing this letter, which she is listening to, states that she was very particular in answering the question on the "Personal question sheet", that she was "entirely without experience". It might turn out after a year or more of practical training here she would be equal to a position in our sewing room, but the assistant I need, whose place she is to fill, has charge of a force of girls sufficient to cut and make dresses for about 450 girls. Our girls are entitled to over 2200 dresses each year, and you can readily see it is something of an undertaking, not only

To the Hon. Com. Indian Affairs, 2.

requiring skill in cutting and fitting, but trained experience to manage girls and secure results. Miss Koerner after seeing the work to be done is appalled at its magnitude, and states that if she had had any idea of it before leaving home she would not have thought of coming here.

Miss Koerner states that she was one of a number of girls trained in the same school who were induced by their instructress to take the Civil Service examination, with a view to appointment in the Indian Service. Without any fault on her part, and with wrong inducements held out to her she has been lead to expend money she could not spare, to get to this place. Her ambitions and pride have been thwarted and outraged, to a degree almost amounting to a crime. I sympathize with her, but at the sametime I cannot allow sympathy to create shortages and difficulties in my work that cannot be overcome. The supplies of the school must be kept up.

Miss Koerner informs me that a practical experienced dressmaker was taking the examination for appointment in the Indian Service, at the time she did, but when she came to the writing of the Essays required by the Civil Service examination, she was greatly disturbed and apparently unequal to them, while she and her young comrade from the same school found no difficulty whatever in meeting such tests, which proved her mental skill, but not her practical ability. The experienced dressmaker is likely the one I should have, but she probably is not on the available list.

I cannot permit the work in my sewing room to drop behind and shall re-employ Miss Searight, temporarily, until I am furnished with a practical employe, capable of doing the work.

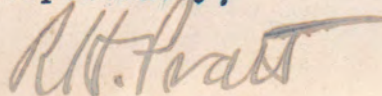
I trust the Department will keep in mind that the person for this place is to take charge of a considerable force of our Indian girls and conduct the cutting, fitting and manufacture of over 2200

To the Hon. Com. Indian Affairs, 3.

dresses per year, and I trust no one will be sent me to fill the place who is incapable of doing that. The work in the sewing room is divided among the assistant seamstresses, one taking the boy's underwear, another the girl's underwear, another the girl's dresses &c. I have capable Indian girls, plenty who are more capable than Miss Koerner, and she here acknowledges this fact, but I have no Indian girl who can superintend this work. It is not such work as can be done by school girls, but requires maturity, considerable ability and experience, in managing workers.

Had I been permitted to know in advance and correspond with Miss Koerner, giving her an idea of the work to be done, she would have been saved all this mortification and expense and I would have been saved further loss of respect for the present system of Civil Service and indignation at the imposition of having forced upon me such an utterly incompetent assignment.

Very respectfully,



Col. & Supt.

Dic. A. G. T.