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OFFICE OF
Indian Affairs
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War Dept.

Oct. 30/06

The projected plan
for cavalry
training at Carlisle

Department of the Interior,
NOVEMBER 1 - 1906

RM

Respectfully referred to
the Commissioner of Indian
Affairs.

Edward M. Dawson

Chief Clerk.

See 10271/06

To Carlisle 11/3/06

EE

File ✓



Ind. Aff.

D.

Mr. Doughty:

After you have
read this please
let me have it
for the Comm's
use,

CFL

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~~For
Comm.~~

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON,

October 30, 1906.



The Honorable

The Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:

In response to your letter of the 24th instant, transmitting a copy of a communication addressed to you on the 16th instant by the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who suggests that the cooperation and support of the War Department be sought with the view to obtaining legislation authorizing the adoption of a plan, proposed by Major William A. Mercer, 7th Cavalry, acting superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School, for the establishment of a special course of training, of a year's duration, to fit Indian boys at that school for the cavalry service, I have the honor to advise you as follows in response to your request for the views of the War Department with regard to the subject in question:

Having in mind the requirements of the military service and the results of the long experience of the Army in the employment of Indians in that service, the War Department cannot favor Major Mercer's proposal to devote a year to the special instruction of Indian boys at Carlisle with the view to their enlistment exclusively in the cavalry service. It is not the policy of the Department to accept many Indians into the military service, or to permit their enlistment in disproportionate numbers for any particular arm of the service, it being the rule not to permit the assignment of an Indian to any organization of which an Indian is already a member. The Department is ready at any time to enlist for the various branches of the military service, in numbers proportioned to the strength of each branch,

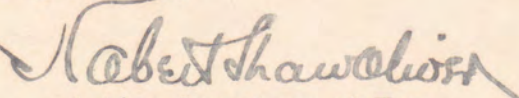
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such graduates of the Carlisle school as are fit for the service and, in view of the military discipline and training that boys now receive during the course of instruction already established at that school, it is not believed that the proposed additional year of special instruction for the cavalry service is either necessary or desirable.

It does not appear to be necessary to establish a recruiting station at the Carlisle school, or to empower the acting superintendent thereof to act as a recruiting officer for the Army, because, if the head of that institution will notify The Military Secretary of the Army whenever there are candidates for enlistment there, an experienced recruiting officer will be sent to the school to examine the candidates and to accept them if they are found fit for service.

Inasmuch as the War Department, for the reasons before stated, finds itself unable to give its support to legislation such as that proposed by the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, it is recommended that the item proposed by the Acting Commissioner as an addition to the Indian Appropriation Bill be amended, if it is to be presented to Congress, by omitting all reference to the cavalry service, to the furnishing of army equipments for the use of the school, and to the detailing of non-commissioned officers as instructors thereat.

Very respectfully,


Acting Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON.

October 30, 1906.

The Honorable

The Secretary of the Interior.

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Very respectfully,
(Signed Robert Shaw Oliver,
Acting Secretary of War.

Education
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1906.

Carlisle
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON. October 16, 1906.

COPY.

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:

Referring to Office letter of May 31, 1906, submitting a plan proposed by Major Wm. A. Mercer, 7th Calvary, U. S. A., Acting Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School, for the special training of Indian boys for service in the Calvary arm of the U. S. Army, I desire to present for your consideration and that of the War Department an item to be inserted in the Indian Appropriation Bill intended to meet certain objections of the War Department as hereinafter set forth.

The plan of Major Mercer was to obtain the cooperation and assistance of the War Department in preparing a suitable number of selected Indian boys for the U. S. Cavalry Service, by a course of instruction at the Carlisle Indian School especially adapted to that end.

In commenting upon this plan, it was said, in the letter above referred to: ~~that~~

The average attendance at the Carlisle Indian School is about one thousand, of which number at least six hundred are boys, collected from the various Indian reservations throughout the United States. This school is conducted in the main as others in the Indian Service, but in addition embraces a military organization of a regiment of cavalry (dismounted), with as much of the army discipline as is necessary for the proper conduct of the school.

The regiment consists of eight troops of about fifty boys each, armed with the Springfield carbine and organized into two squadrons of four troops each with a full complement of field, staff and troop officers. The drill is that of the United States Cavalry Drill Regulations, and though comparatively little time is devoted to military matters, some of the troops put up fine drills, while the regiment marches finely and executes the ceremonies and Butt's Manual, to music, in a way that shows the interest taken by the boys in this training.

This large Indian School has an academic department in which the usual studies are taught, an industrial department carrying fourteen industries, a department of music including instruction in band music and an athletic department in which the military organization plays a prominent part.

It is proposed to use these four departments as a foundation on which to build and maintain at the school a cavalry troop, mounted and composed of carefully selected young men from the student body who volunteer for military service, and who are physically, morally, intellectually and industrially well fitted for the United States Cavalry, and to give them a year's training as members of the school's mounted troop. It is further proposed to devote their time during this year almost entirely to military instruction under a first class army drill sergeant, with an ex-first sergeant of cavalry in immediate charge of the administration of the troops, provided the Superintendent can secure the services of such trained officers. Otherwise, it may be necessary to ask the War Department for assistance in securing such material. The troop will be organized after the manner of a troop of regular cavalry, with full complement of non-commissioned officers, trumpeters, artificers, cooks, clerks, etc., with rations and clothing issued by the school quartermaster, and meals prepared by the troop cook, the troop in every way to be drilled and its affairs administered as a troop of cavalry in the regular service.

The acting Superintendent invites special attention to the fact that Indians are fine rifle shots and the best natural horsemen on earth. Add to these natural qualifications the academic, industrial and military training which can be given at this well equipped Government school, and there should be formed a body of young Indian men that will compare favorably with the average of white or colored, either in the army or that can be recruited for it.

An obligation will be exacted from each member of this troop, who can be certified after a proper course of instruction to be well qualified, to enlist in the cavalry, thus affording opportunity for that branch of the Service annually to get not only a few fine recruits, but young men who should make splendid enlisted soldiers, artificers, musicians, etc., from whom also may be secured much good material for non-commissioned officers.

Secretary

It is of course not intended to make Carlisle a military school in the usual sense of that expression; nor is it intended that an Indian troop shall be maintained for the Army; but the purpose is to train individual Indians who, by natural aptitude or acquired traits of character, are fitted, on the application of a troop commander, to take a place in the army as cooks, blacksmiths, clerks, trumpeters, quartermaster sergeants, or simply as good material for soldiers or non-commissioned company officers.

The Superintendent is not unmindful of the fact that the army tried the experiment of enlisting and making soldiers of Indians, and that it was so far a failure that the plan was abandoned. The one now suggested, however, does not go to the extent of the previous effort, but aims simply to provide a body of well trained, disciplined young men who may from time to time be drawn upon for the purposes of the Army.

Under the former system of enlistment of Indians in the Army, they were recruited on a plan similar to that adopted for white recruits. The Indian is naturally diffident, restive under restraint, undisciplined, peculiarly averse to ridicule, and therefore to take the average Indian off a reservation, and place him in the Army will generally prove a failure; but the plan proposed by the Superintendent is to eliminate all these features from the case, so far as possible, in that the young Indian taken from Carlisle will be well educated mentally, thoroughly trained to discipline, will have a knowledge of military tactics, and be grounded in the necessary work incident to his life, and will enter far in advance of the average white recruit. This will remove the principal handicap to making the Indian a successful soldier.

The whole plan can be carried out, the Superintendent says, by making Carlisle a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits with himself as the recruiting officer and with no additional expense because of such an arrangement. However, if considered more desirable, he suggests that two or more suitable non-commissioned officers could be detailed as instructors instead of subjecting the Indian school appropriation to the expense of hiring ex-sergeants for that purpose.

The part which it is desired the Army will take, in addition to encouraging the work, the Superintendent says, is to issue to him a suitable number of cavalry horses - not to exceed fifty - with forage and equipments, for which as an officer of the Army he will be responsible.

Under date of June 12, 1906, the Acting Judge Advocate General of the Army, in communication to the Secretary of War, said:

I do not think the Secretary of war could without the ex-

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Secretary.

press authority of statute establish and maintain out of current appropriations for the support of the Army such an agency of recruitment as is here proposed. The obligation to subsequently enlist in the cavalry arm of the service which it is proposed the students undergoing training shall assume is not one with which the Governemnt could enforce compliance, nor could such obligation operate in any way to subject them to the discipline of the Army or to make them in any sense a part thereof. Not being a part of the Army they could not, in the absence of a statute authorizing it, share in appropriations made by Congress for the support of the Army in the way that is here suggested, that is, by the issue to them of fifty cavalry horses, with the necessary equipments and forage. The difficulty here pointed out is not obviated by making the issue to the Army officer detailed as Superintendent of said school rather than to the school itself. The fact remains that the use to which it is proposed to put the property is not that contemplated by Congress in making the appropriation of money necessary for its purposes.

The authority of the Secretary of War to detail non-commissioned officers for duty as instructors at said school rests upon precisely the same basis as his authority to issue property to it, and must be denied for the same reason.

In order to secure appropriate legislation for making Carlisle a recruiting station for Indian soldiers and also to overcome the legal objections of the Judge Advocate General, the following is suggested as an addition to the item for the Carlisle Indian School in the Indian Appropriation Bill to be presented to the Congress:

For the purpose of giving mounted instruction and training to a selected number of Indian youth enrolled in the Carlisle Indian School, to fit them for the U. S. Cavalry Service, there is hereby appropriated for the purchase of sixty saddle horses \$3,600; forage for said horses \$4,900; construction of a stable \$8,000; total \$16,500: provided, that the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to issue to said school all army equipments necessary for a cavalry troop of fifty-seven, and as a further aid in the work of instruction to detail one or more non-commissioned officers as instructors for duty at said school.

In event ^{case} the proposed item is incorporated in the law, the required rations and clothing for the students, as well as beds, bed-

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Secretary.

ding, medicine and medical attention, light, fuel, cooking ranges and cooking utensils will be provided out of the general appropriation for the school, and therefore nothing additional is required for these items.

As the cooperation and moral support of the War Department is necessary to successfully inaugurate the plan proposed, I respectfully recommend, if the same meets with your approval, that the foregoing item of legislation be submitted to the Secretary of War with a request for his views and recommendation in the premises; and also, if the general plan meets with his approval, that that Department will cooperate with this Department in securing this legislation, should either of the committees of Congress ask for his opinion as to the wisdom of the proposed measure. Further than this, the Office would be thankful for any suggestions the War Department may be pleased to make in the way of amendments to the draft of legislation herein submitted.

A copy of this letter is herewith inclosed.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) C. F. Larrabee
Acting Commissioner.

JHD (M)