

JOINT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE INDIAN AFFAIRS

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA.

Saturday, February 7, 1914.

The Joint Commission met in the Y.M.C.A. hall at the Carlisle Indian School, Carlisle, Pa., at 8:30 o'clock A.M.

Present: Senators Robinson (Chairman) and Lane; Representatives Stephens and Carter.

TESTIMONY OF MR. WALLACE DENNY.

The witness was duly sworn by the Chairman.

The Chairman. You are assistant disciplinarian at the Carlisle Institute?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. How long have you been so engaged?

Mr. Denny. Since 1907.

The Chairman. Were you at the school or at any wise connected with it prior to that time?

Mr. Denny. I was a student.

The Chairman. How long were you a student in Carlisle?

Mr. Denny. 10 years.

The Chairman. Where were you from when you came here?

Mr. Denny. Oneida, Wis.

The Chairman. Are you a full-blood?

Mr. Denny. Well, I do not think so; I think about seven-eighths, or something like that.

Representative Stephens. Of what tribe you?

Mr. Denny. Oneida, of Wisconsin.

The Chairman. Have you during the time you have been employed here served in the same capacity you are now serving?

Mr. Denny. Yes, sir. Assistant disciplinarian.

The Chairman. You have been, I presume, familiar with

conditions in the school during your whole time as assistant disciplinarian?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. What are the general conditions now prevailing at Carlisle with reference to discipline and good order among the pupils?

Mr. Denny. The discipline in our school here has been very poor, very poor.

The Chairman. Is it improving, in your judgment?

Mr. Denny. Growing worse.

The Chairman. How long has it been growing worse? How long has that condition existed?

Mr. Denny. I should say from one to three years.

The Chairman. Who is the chief disciplinarian?

Mr. Denny. Mr. McKean.

The Chairman. To what do you attribute the bad order and its increase in the school? What is the cause of this lack of discipline ^{that} is growing worse?

Mr. Denny. Going a little way back —

The Chairman. You may state anything you desire.

Mr. Denny. We had a superintendent here — Major Mercer, and during his time the pupils were allowed to dance as many as two to three times a week, and just a general good time, and that lasted four years. When Mr. Friedman came here he reduced those social privileges at the school, and it seems that the pupils have turned against him ever since. It seems to me the pupils were here just to have a good time. We have students here — more students fifteen to twenty years of age, and of course they just looked at the fun and good time. Mr.

Friedman, the superintendent, got to the point where he gave one reception during the month, and one sociable. Well, then they just thought he was against them all the time, and he put harder work in their school. He substituted from a quiet hour to a study hour — regular school work in the evening and less sociable.

And their meals — they do not get a very good meal here. I must admit that; because I was detailed in the dining room. Every third day I go in there.

The Chairman. As I understand you, the following are among the causes: First, the curtailment of social privileges; second, an increase of the students' work —

Mr. Denny. Well, harder work.

The Chairman. Harder work; third, the poor meals that are served them; and, fourth —

Mr. Denny. I want to mention the fourth. I do not know whether this will come under that, but the fourth is that the employees do not work in harmony with the superintendent. I am safe to say that about three-fourths of them are against the superintendent; in fact, perhaps more. And those employees — I have heard it myself — have discussed freely the superintendent's work before the students, and of course, that arouses them.

The Chairman. Now, there is a feeling of general hostility on the part of the students, and on the part of the greater part of the employees toward the superintendent?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. You have explained some of the reasons that have caused this feeling on the part of the pupils toward the

superintendent, Now, what is it that has so arrayed the employees against him? Why is it they do not cooperate with him?

Mr. Denny. The superintendent, his intentions are all right, as far as I know. He has got his heart in the work, and he is a hard worker, but it seems to me he is unfortunate — he is not a man that appeals to people.

The Chairman. He cannot secure the confidence of the pupils and the employees?

Mr. Denny. Yes, that is it — I cannot express it.

The Chairman. What do you think is the remedy for these conditions? You may express yourself freely. What can be done? Is it necessary that something be done about the school? And, if so, what do you think ought to be done?

Mr. Denny. Yes. The only thing that has got to be done — that is, you have got to change the head.

The Chairman. Got to get a new superintendent?

Mr. Denny. Yes, a new superintendent, or something has got to be done, to tell you the truth.

The Chairman. What do you think of the school in its general conditions and work? Do the pupils take hold of their studies with interest?

Mr. Denny. Yes. Those I have, they take hold of their work, but of course — I cannot tell you, but there certainly is funny atmosphere around here.

The Chairman. Now would you characterize that atmosphere? Is it one of mutiny, or mere dissatisfaction and discontent?

Mr. Denny. Dissatisfaction.

The Chairman. The dissatisfaction is general, is it?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. Now, you have referred to the meals not being satisfactory when you were detailed to the dining room. I wish you would be a little more explicit about that and tell wherein they were not satisfactory. What did they serve, and how was it served?

Mr. Denny. As far as I could see — I walked around the dining room, all over the dining room, and we are short of grub, we are short of bread; everybody would be asking for bread, and before the matron comes they tell the students there is no more bread in the dining room, and we know that there is plenty of it in the bakery shop. There is plenty of it in the cupboard, but they are allowed just so much. Then we go to work and tap the bell to get them quiet, and at the tap of the bell begin to send them out. They are dissatisfied and kind of unruly. I don't say they are bad, but they are hungry, and it is a mighty hard thing to please them.

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The Chairman. Now, you are a man of experience and had long been a student at the school before you were an employee here. You say you believe a sufficient quantity of bread has not been served to the pupils, and they were forced to go hungry on that account?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. Why is that true? Bread is cheap. Do you understand why the policy of the administration of the school permits a condition like that?

Mr. Denny. I did try to trace it back, and pretty near got into trouble about it. I went right straight to the superintendent and I reported, so he called a meeting, I think,

twice — yes, twice — and they tried to look into it. It included the quartermaster, the cook, the matron, the dining room matron, and the girls' matron, and the large boys' disciplinarian, and Mr. Stauffer, the music teacher, and the baker, and they tried to remedy that. It went all right a day or so, and then went right back. The quartermaster says to the superintendent he is allowed to feed them just so much, and he is going to stay at that limit.

The Chairman. Who fixes the limit?

Mr. Denny. He told me that there is a rule set for them, and he cannot go beyond that. The reason why I took this up to the superintendent, because I know something is going to bust in the dining room — something is going to give somewhere.

The Chairman. There is great dissatisfaction there, and you think there is liable to be serious trouble about it?

Mr. Denny. Yes, I realize — for instance, there is 10 large boys weighing from 150 up to nearly 200 pounds, 10 at a table, and they are growing from 18 to 21, and they need to eat a lot more than I do, because I have stopped growing and those fellows are just growing. They have lots of life and lots of exercise outside in the air.

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The Chairman. Their period of life calls for an abundance of food, of course?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. And they do not get it?

Mr. Denny. They do not get it.

The Chairman. Have you noticed the service there with reference to knives and forks and cups? Has there been trouble

about that?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. Tell us what it is.

Mr. Denny. I complained to the dining room matron about it, and she says she could not get it.

The Chairman. You mean there was not a sufficient supply of them?

Mr. Denny. They have them here at the storehouse, as far as I understand.

The Chairman. I mean in the dining room.

Mr. Denny. In the dining room they do not have enough, and of course the boys — the boys, they are not going to eat the proper way; they are going to make the best of it. Excuse me — I started to make a statement a while ago, that the boys realize — they say in a report that Congress appropriated \$170,000 or \$172,000 for the school, and we have plenty of hogs here at the school, and they was sold. They realize that.

The Chairman. Are the products of the farm here used on the table or are they sold?

Mr. Denny. We use all of the vegetables, right here. They can them in the fall, and then they used them to the students.

The Chairman. What about the meats?

Mr. Denny. The hogs are sold, and of course they do not butcher here any cattle. The cattle we have here they use for butter and milk.

The Chairman. How often do they serve butter here?

Mr. Denny. I cannot say. I suppose about twice a week or three times a week. In summer time they serve more, because

then they do not have so many students.

The Chairman. How often do they serve milk?

Mr. Denny. I do not think they give them milk.

The Chairman. Do they get any eggs?

Mr. Denny. No, we do not have any chickens. There are a few.

The Chairman. They do not serve any eggs on the table?

Mr. Denny. No.

The Chairman. What are the moral conditions in the school?
Is there much drinking among the boys?

Mr. Denny. There has been.

The Chairman. Is it increasing or growing less?

Mr. Denny. It has been better this year than it used to be, but the moral condition of the school here — it is better well, it is a little better than I have known that it was, than what it ought to be.

The Chairman. What is the drinking attributable to? Is there much drunkenness?

Mr. Denny. No. Those pupils that are drunkards before they came here are the ones that are carrying on that.

The Chairman. What do you do with a boy when he gets drunk?

Mr. Denny. Put him in the guard house. We have a guard house for that purpose.

The Chairman. How long do you keep them there, as a rule?

Mr. Denny. I tell you my position here. I am in charge of the small boys, and of course they do not get drunk.

The Chairman. You do not get any of those?

Mr. Denny. That just runs to the large boys. As far as

I know, I think, from one week to ten days, or something like that.

The Chairman. What are the regulations of the school with reference to the punishment of the boys under your jurisdiction? What right have you to punish them and what kind of punishment are you authorized to inflict?

Mr. Denny. Well, I have locked them up at times when it is necessary, for a few days. I had one drunk this fall, and I locked him up, I think, about a week or so.

The Chairman. Do you whip them?

Mr. Denny. Mr. Friedman gave me orders, and I don't whip them any more. They are sometimes a little tart, you know, and I put them across my knee, and spank them.

The Chairman. What is the name of the boy that was said to have been struck by ^{your} his fist and hit ~~sk~~ by a ring above the eye here?

Inspector Linnen. The boy who testified, his name was Braun.

Mr. Denny. That was Ira Cloud. The boy came back here — he served here five years. He paid his own way, and when he got back here, he went to the hospital. Right away he had chicken pox, and he was unruly in the hospital, and they could not control him. Of course, as soon as they released him I got him back, and before I had a chance to put him in the shops at his trade I kept him around the quarters, and I could not make him work. I cannot put him to work. Well, while he works, he will shirk, and doing the summer he told me himself he was drinking heavily — he was doing as he pleased. He has not got a father — well, he has a father but not a legal one.

When I did go for him I asked him what was the reason he was doing this, and he told me that he paid his way back to Carlisle and could do exactly as he pleased — a boy about 17 years old. I told him to do the work, and he deliberately refused. I tried to put him to work in the afternoon, and he went to the store. I sent for the boys and we got him back, and he was very impudent to me. He showed fight right away, and we had a regular boxing match.

The Chairman. Did he strike you?

Mr. Denny. Yes, right straight in my face. I was not ready; he could not have hit me if I was ready. He certainly did soak me.

The Chairman. You struck him when he struck you?

Mr. Denny. I struck him, and I locked him up for a day.

The Chairman. Did you knock him down?

Mr. Denny. No; he went backwards.

The Chairman. Did you have on a ring that cut his eye?

Mr. Denny. No, only this one here (exhibiting a plain band ring).

The Chairman. He struck you first?

Mr. Denny. Yes, he struck me first.

The Chairman. There were some other boys that you were said to have struck and knocked down a stairway. You you remember that?

Mr. Denny. Yes; I threw him down stairs. We had a kind of little insurrection here. One night the lights went out, and I got my officer around the quarters there to control the door, and the boys liked to jump out of the quarters, carrying on high. It was on a masquerade night. I was standing in the

hall way. There was no lights, and they threw a stone — they knew where I was standing. They threw a stone and just happened to miss me, and they threw coal, in there near my office. It was pitch dark. I came out on the porch. One of the boys back in the quarters, he came up on the porch, and he hit me with all his might, and he jumped back in the quarters. I saw the boy. I recognized him at once, and I went up, and he lied to me, and I told him to come down in the office. Referring to this boy — James Kalawat — he came from jail to Carlisle, right from jail, and I always had trouble with him ever since he has been here.

The Chairman. When you went back there —

Mr. Denny. I brought him down, and we had a tussle. I told him to come down in the office. I wanted to see the boy — what was his object of hitting me like that? I brought him down; I got him down the steps, down the stairway, and got him down in my office by force. We had to tussle. He was a pretty good-sized boy. This was last fall.

The Chairman. You were trying then to suppress disorder?

Mr. Denny. Yes, sir; to suppress insurrection at the school. The large boys went to work and they tore the bleachers down. They cut Mr. McKean's head that very same night. Somebody hit him with a stone.

The Chairman. What did that boy hit you with?

Mr. Denny. He grabbed hold of the stuff that was lying up there in that trash box. I saw him running there, and the boys told me about it, but I did not lock them up because they threw everything down. I was trying to catch the boy.

The Chairman. Are you charged with any responsibility

for the conduct of the larger boys?

Mr. Denny. No, I am not. I went by here last week, and a fellow on the third floor hit me with a chair — just missed my head. That is the condition we have here. I have never done anything to the larger boys. That is the attitude we have here towards those who are trying to control the boys. For my part, I am trying to control those boys. I myself admit
912 I have some pretty bad boys.

The Chairman. Have you thought of a plan to stop so much drinking in the school among the pupils?

Mr. Denny. The only way you could stop that is to have a standard. Before the pupil would enter the school you would have some standard —

The Chairman. And not admit drunkards and drinkers to the school?

Mr. Denny. Yes, sir.

The Chairman. You think they do not contract the habit of drinking here, but contract it before they come here?

Mr. Denny. Before they come here. That has been ~~xxxx~~ proven in every case.

The Chairman. If it is true that the drinking habit is not contracted here but is contracted before the student comes, your suggestion would seem to me to be a very intelligent one, because it would prevent a demoralization that naturally results to refuse to admit pupils who have a record for drinking. Do you know whether any effort is made to ascertain the habits of boys before they are admitted to the school?

Mr. Denny. No, not to my knowledge.

The Chairman. Anybody is admitted without regard to his record?

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Mr. Denny. Yes; we have some desperate cases here.

I want to make a suggestion here. This drinking goes on here, and a kind of insurrection is always started by something like what we call the "white trash" here, boys with just a little Indian blood. Like boot-legging — those boys could put their citizens clothes on and go to town in any saloon and get the whiskey and bring it back here and give it to the boys, or give it to them in town.

The Chairman. How many of that class of boys are in the school?

Mr. Denny. Not so very many. I could not say in round numbers.

The Chairman. Don't you think that by calling the attention of the officers to these boys the persons who sell liquor in the town could be prevented from furnishing them liquor?

Mr. Denny. You can hardly tell. The bar tenders in town will not — I know there is not one bar tender that will sell whiskey to an Indian boy.

The Chairman. If he knows it?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. It would seem that if the officers could be become acquainted with the boys in school who have so much white blood in them that there is no noticeable Indian blood, it might be very easily prevented.

Mr. Denny. Yes. I give you an instance. This Louis Braun that was here last night — I sent the boys in full uniform to chapel with the rest of the students. That Louis Braun sneaked out back of my quarters, and another large boy,

a white boy, a cousin of his, passed him his citizen's clothes through the window, and he was changing his clothing to leave the grounds for the night. Those are the kind of characters we have here.

The Chairman. Is Louis Braun among the tough boys in the school?

941 Mr. Denny. No, not really. He has never done wrong here. He goes to school all day and eats and sleeps largely.

414 The Chairman. What is the relationship between the superintendent and the band master?

Mr. Denny. A very close friend, as far as I could understand.

The Chairman. Does he appear to exert any influence or control over the superintendent?

Mr. Denny. Yes.

The Chairman. In what particular?

Mr. Denny. Well, ~~the~~ his suggestions, the suggestions that he makes, his general stand. This band master is just a band master; he is not a disciplinarian, ^{but} he is taken in about the discipline of the school.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. NELLIE ROBERTSON DENNY.

The witness was duly sworn by the Chairman.

The Chairman. You are the wife of the assistant disciplinarian?

Mrs. Denny. Yes, sir; of the small boys' quarters.

The Chairman. Were you formerly employed at Carlisle yourself?

Mrs. Denny. Yes, sir.

The Chairman. In what capacity?