

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

Education.

Office of Indian Affairs.

Washington, November 29, 1892.

To U.S. Indian Agents:

Your attention is called to the attendance at school of children of school age, belonging to your agency. It is the earnest wish of this Office that every healthy child between 5 and 18, shall be enrolled in school, and shall, if possible, attend regularly.

The statistics for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1892, indicate a gratifying growth in school attendance. The enrolment increased from 17,926 during the preceding year to 19,793; and the average attendance increased from 13,588 to 15,111. I am anxious that the enrolment during the present fiscal year shall present even a greater per cent. of increase than during the past year, and that the regularity of attendance may be decidedly improved.

In a few cases the agent can now say: "Every child of school age and suitable health belonging to my agency is enrolled in some school." This may be the case in your agency. If so, your energies should now be directed to holding what you have already gained, and to securing in addition greater regularity of attendance. If the children of your agency are not all enrolled, then your plain duty is to do your utmost to secure a complete enrolment.

First, the reservation government schools should be filled. After this, if any children remain, (as will generally be the case) pupils should be sent away to fill the non-reservation government schools. Of these schools there are now twenty, (with

a capacity of nearly 5,000,) all of which it is expected will be in operation at an early day. They have been established at a large expense for land, buildings, water supply, furnishings, and equipment for advanced educational instruction, as well as industrial training on farm and in shops; they are maintained at large expense for employe force, supplies, etc.; they should be filled with pupils, and the reservation schools are the sources of supply.

To carry out the wishes of the Indian Office as above outlined, persistent, patient, well-directed effort will be needed from every agent throughout the year. Firmness, coupled with prudence, must be the watchword. Repeated failures should not be allowed to induce discouragement, but should rather spur on the agent to renewed and increased effort. Wisdom and tact must be used. If individual Indians prove incorrigible, their cases should be reported to this Office for instructions, with recommendations in regard to the withholding of rations, annuities, etc. The police force should certainly be used, if necessary, to return runaway children to school, and it may be used in securing original enrolment of children; but care should be exercised not to provoke the Indians to open hostilities.

While the "school age" is fixed at from 5 to 18, it is not intended that those who have passed the maximum figure shall be excluded from the government schools; on the contrary, they should be retained as long as they desire, or can be induced to remain, or as long as they can receive further benefit from connection with the school. Children under the age of 5 may be received into the government schools if facilities are at hand for their instruction in kindergarten methods.

A great difficulty in filling the non-reservation schools lies in the objections of parents to separation from their children. This must be overcome, if possible, by kindness, by persuasion, and by holding out the advantages, both to the child and the parent, to be derived from a course of training at the industrial school. In a few instances, I am sorry to say, the difficulty has been increased by the indifference or active opposition of agency and school employes. I need hardly say that the Office wishes and expects the hearty co-operation of every employe.

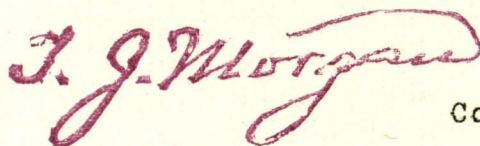
You are instructed to enter immediately upon the work as indicated above. Please take a personal interest in this matter. I trust you will find time from your arduous and multifarious duties to give to this subject the time and attention which it demands, and thereby secure to these little wards of the government such an education as shall prepare them to assume the duties of life and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Your attention is invited to the law of Congress (Public-
No. 119) 1893:

That hereafter the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, subject to the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, is hereby authorized and directed to make and enforce by proper means such rules and regulations as will secure the attendance of Indian children of suitable age and health at schools established and maintained for their benefit.

Also, to Paragraphs 21, 22, 23, and 24, Revised Rules for Indian Schools.

Very respectfully,



Commissioner.

^{circular}
Education

Nov 29/1892

all
Children to
be put in
School