

CHEMAWA AMERICAN

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WASHINGTON AUTHORITIES DO NOT FAVOR ENROLLMENT OF ALASKANS

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Last year the suggestion was made to the Department that the facilities at Chemawa might be utilized in cooperation with the Bureau of Education, for the training of specially selected Alaskan students of high school grade for teachers and leaders among their own people. The suggestion appealed to Dr. Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, as one worthy of serious consideration and he sent Dr. Cooper, the Commissioner of Education, to Chemawa last summer to look the plant and equipment over and to confer with the Superintendent in regard to the matter. Since Dr. Cooper did not find teacher training courses at Chemawa of Junior college grade he did not think it wise to undertake the experiment under present conditions; so, for the present at least, the matter has been dropped.

In order that our Alaskan students, both present and past, may understand the situation, we are publishing the following extract from the recent hearings on the Indian Appropriation Bill, for their information:

ATTENDANCE OF ALASKAN CHILDREN AT CHEMAWA SCHOOL

(From Hearings before the Subcommittee of the House
Committee on Appropriations—Interior Department
Appropriation Bill for 1931.)

Mr. Cramton: As to the policy of the bureau with reference to bringing children from Alaska, of course, the language is that on the individual order of the Secretary they may be brought there. In the Chemawa American recently there was an item with reference to the visit of Dr. W. J. Cooper, United States Commissioner of Education, to Chemawa, and it stated that his mission was to look over the plant and equipment and to confer with Superintendent Lipps with regard to utilizing Chemawa as a vocational training school for carefully selected students who have completed courses in the schools of Alaska.

Of course, the purpose of the committee in leaving this proviso in and giving authority to the Secretary was not to open the way for him to have advantage there but only to take care of an occasional emergency. It was not intended to open the way for overruling the policy which had been established, but to let him take care of an emergency case.

Mr. Rhoads: I have had some correspondence and conversations with Doctor Cooper and I learned that what he needed was higher grades and a different type of Education than we could furnish at the present time, and by mutual agreement we allowed the matter to drop for the present.

Mr. French: May I ask about what the enrollment is from Alaska now?

Mr. Dodd: The present enrollment of Alaskan children is 69.

Mr. French: Of that number how many have been admitted as a result of this provision that we are carrying in the law and how many are left overs or the carry overs from the prior program.

Mr. Dodd: I can not give exact information as to the number who have come in under the special change in the law. That is, with reference to the number that are in school now. Since the provision was made in the fiscal year 1925, approval had been granted by the department for the enrollment of 55 Alaskan children in the Salem school.

Mr. French: Does that represent about the demand of those who meet the condition indicated? Would you say this covers about the period of four years?

Mr. Dodd: Yes, sir.

Mr. French: It would represent about 15 a year. Do you think there ought to be more who want to go to Chemawa to meet the conditions indicated by Doctor Cooper of the Bureau of Education as being Alaskan Indians, for whom facilities can not be provided in Alaska?

Mr. Peairs: Doctor Cooper's idea, it is said, is they should take only those students who want to train for leadership or for teaching; along some line, not necessarily academic, but industrial and academic both; and they would not take them until they had finished the schools in Alaska. Therefore, Doctor Cooper said that he would not be interested at all unless they should add two years of junior college work.

Mr. French: Of course, if we are giving the Alaskan work that is comparable to the work that is offered in Chemawa there would be no particular reason, it would seem, for bringing them down to Chemawa. But is it not true that we carry on in Chemawa beyond anything that we have already provided for in Alaska?

Mr. Peairs: Yes, sir; that is true. There is a little of senior high school work in Alaska, but it is largely academic, and the full senior high school at the Salem School would offer some vocational courses, which would be available for that class of students from Alaska. The idea would be to bring some in who wanted to prepare to teach along vocational lines, as well as along other lines, so they naturally would bring in some senior high-school students and carry them through.

Mr. French: Just one or two more questions. First, how many would probably now ask for attendance in Chemawa from Alaska on the basis of the senior high school?

Mr. Peairs: Superintendent Lipps, of the Salem School, has conferred with Doctor Cooper, commissioner of education, concerning future enrollment of Alaskans in the Salem School, and Doctor Cooper has suggested that the school might well carry an average of 50 Alaskan students and that 15 or 20 might be sent each year from Alaska. These would be selected in order to take senior high school work and instruction in vocational courses which would qualify them for teaching.

Mr. Cramton: There are 55 there. Have you the numbers for each year?

Mr. Dodd: I have not.

Mr. Cramton: Is not the number increasing materially? It is my recollection when we went into this before that there were only a few admitted. I am surprised to find that there are 55.

Mr. Dodd: This 55 covers the four years.

Mr. Cramton: But it is my recollection that in the first year or two years there were not really any. I wish you would put it in by years.

Mr. Dodd: I will check it up and furnish the information by years.

Mr. Cramton: I do not think we contemplated as large a number as that to come in. It was only the very exceptional cases.