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The Thunderbird



INDIANS believed that thunder and lightning were produced by beings, or a number of beings, different from all the others. On the great plains, where the phenomena of thunderstorms are very striking, and northwestward to the Pacific Coast, they were supposed to be caused by birds of enormous size, which produced thunder by flapping their wings and lightning by opening and closing their eyes. The great downpour which often accompanies thunder was sometimes accounted for by supposing that the bird carries a lake of fresh water on its back.

Although the species of the bird is often quite indefinite, on the North Pacific Coast it is conceived of as similar to, if not identical with, a large hawk found in the high mountains. On the plains a thunderstorm was supposed to be due to a contest between a thunderbird and a huge rattlesnake or an underground or sub-aqueous monster. On the North Pacific Coast a thunderbird was supposed to be catching whales during a thunderstorm, using his wings as a bow to shoot arrows. The rebound of the wings in the air makes the thunder, and for this reason thunder is heard in different parts of the sky at the same time, being the noise from each wing.

The thunderbird was naturally held in awe, and a person who had been struck by lightning and who recovered became an efficient shaman or medicine man. (From Handbook of American Indians, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 30.)



HE HAS DEPARTED

Supt. O. H. Lipps bade Chemawa farewell last Thursday and proceeded to Sacramento, California, where on May 1st he assumed charge of the government Indian Agency. It is not necessary for us to state that Supt. Lipps will prove the man for the place, important and difficult to fill as it undoubtedly is, for his ability is known and recognized throughout the Service. There is nothing that we can say that will in any way add to his fine reputation. All that we can hope to do is to remind our readers of our retiring Superintendent's manifold merits and of his labors in behalf of our great school.

Four years as the head of our institution gives us an insight into his aims, his aspirations, his instincts, his great ability, and makes us feel our local loss all the more keenly. Of the many changes made here in a material way by Supt. Lipps it is not necessary for us to speak—these things are visible monuments and speak for themselves. That they are many and varied will be granted by all. We would like to draw attention, in our feeble way, to another and higher quality of Mr. Lipps—finer, perhaps, than we can define.

The mind of a man, his very soul, is difficult of discussion, but of Mr. Lipps we claim at all times a wonderful fairness and impartiality in his judgments, and also remarkably keen ability for mental analysis. He, himself, declared that he could not be "jazzy" and we must all respect and honor him for the stand that he took where pure frivolity, utter abandonment, was to be banned. His are high ideals and in their working out there was ever uppermost in his mind the welfare of the hundreds of students under his control. He is a studious and scholarly man, and we have not found his equal in the Service in the matter of Indian history—knowledge of the various tribes. He has maintained to the present his faith in the Indian people and any act of his of an official character will always be taken with their good in mind.

But why go on? We can only fall short of what we would like to state. Not only do we of Chemawa feel badly over his departure, but the people of Salem, and other sections of Oregon as well, regret the necessity of this move. In our hearts we follow Mr. Lipps to his new field and our good wishes will be with him always.

Mr. Kirk and Mr. Briggs were Roseburg visitors during the week-end.