

# Delinquency Rate Among Pupils At Indian School Virtually Nil

CHEMAWA, Ore. (AP)—A Navajo Indian child rarely gets into trouble with the law.

Victor E. Hill, superintendent of the U. S. Indian School here, thinks the Navajos could teach white parents a lot of things.

The Chemawa Indian School, begun 78 years ago for Northwest Indians, now is used solely for the special Navajo Indian education program. It became exclusively Navajo last year because the Northwest Indians now go to public schools.

Hill said the delinquency rate among the 700 Navajos at the school is virtually nil. They don't get in trouble on the 400-acre campus, or when they go to nearby Salem for recreation.

There hasn't been a case of theft involving the boys and girls at the school since Hill came here from Alaska four years ago.

Chemawa is one of 10 U. S. Indian schools which are training teen-age Navajos from New Mexico and Arizona.

When the students come here, they have had little or no schooling. They know little or no English. Most of them enter between 12 and 14 years of age, but some are old as 22.

The five years of schooling here is designed to train them for life on or off the reservations. Only 6 per cent go back to the reservations.

In the first three years, they

are taught English, mathematics, science, history, and good social and work habits.

The emphasis is on vocations in the last two years. The boys learn such things as farming and auto, metal and wood shop. The girls study sewing, laundry, cooking, family relations, grooming, housekeeping and child care.

"The Navajo children have the same intelligence pattern as white children," Hill said. "Some are brilliant, some are average and some are dull."

"When they leave here, we send some on to high school and college. Others go into skilled jobs, such as the aircraft industry."

"We have no difficulty placing them in jobs. They have a fine reputation for being good, steady workers. We also get summer jobs for those who want them."

They live in attractive dormitories. The rooms, especially those of the girls, are colorful and tidy. The girls wear brightly colored dresses, while the boys wear levis.

Betty Zennie, a 17-year-old from Tuba City, Ariz., is student body president. She's the first girl ever to win that honor.

Betty is in her fifth year. Next year, she'll enter a public high school in Salem, and will live with a white family. She plans to become a nurse.

"We place most of our graduates with white families for a year so

they can learn normal family living, which you can't learn in a regimented place like this," Hill said.

The health of the children now is near normal, having improved steadily over the past 10 years. Their teeth are far better than

those of white children. The new students, of which there are 200 this year, are taught through Navajo interpreters.

The first things they learn are to look into a person's face when talking to him, and to use names in addressing people. Many of the

students are using English-style names for the first time, having been given them just before they came to school.

They learn fast. Most seem happy and friendly.

Mrs. Jane Wilson, a bride of three months and one of the inter-

preters, is a Navajo. Her husband, also a member of the tribe, is teaching in Phoenix, Ariz.

This program for teen-age education was started in 1947. At the same time, regular grade schools were built on the reservations.

Hill says there still aren't

enough reservation schools, and only about half of the Navajo children go to them. Consequently, the need for the teen-age program will exist for a long time.

Every summer, six teachers from each of the 10 schools in this program spend five weeks on the

reservation. They go from hogan to hogan to spread the gospel of education.

"It speaks well for the Navajos that they are willing to send their children so far away to school," Hill says. "It shows how important they think education is."

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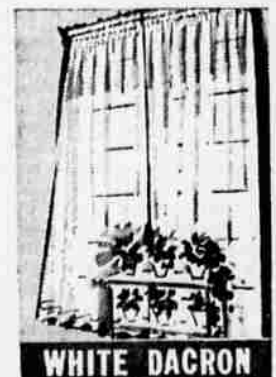
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