

SUPPORT OF INDIAN CONTRACT SCHOOLS.

FEBRUARY 2, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

Mr. COCKRELL presented the following

**MEMORANDUM IN THE MATTER OF AN APPROPRIATION FOR
THE SUPPORT OF INDIAN CONTRACT SCHOOLS DURING THE
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1899.**

The amount allowed by Congress for Indian contract schools for the current fiscal year is 40 per cent of the amount used for that class of schools during the fiscal year 1895. The Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives has placed upon the Indian appropriation bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1899 (H. R. 6896), an item providing for an appropriation equal to 20 per cent of the amount used for contract schools, in 1895, upon the theory that such reduction will be in line with the policy adopted by the Government in regard to contract schools.

In support of the contention that such theory is not correct, and that such reduction would be an injury to the Indian children now in the contract schools, and detrimental to the best interests of the Indian service, and therefore that no reduction should be made, the following is submitted:

The policy of abolishing the contract schools and substituting therefor Government schools was first put into practice by Secretary of the Interior Hoke Smith, who, in his first annual report, dated November 21, 1894, made the following announcement:

The contract schools are now the subject of general discussion. I agree fully with those who oppose the use of public money for the support of sectarian schools. But this question should be considered practically. The schools have grown up. Money has been invested in their construction at a time when they were recognized as wise instrumentalities for the accomplishment of good. I do not think it proper to allow the intense feeling of opposition to sectarian education, which is showing itself all over the land, to induce the Department to disregard existing conditions. We need the schools now, or else we need a large appropriation to build schools to take their place.

It would scarcely be just to abolish them entirely—to abandon instantly a policy so long established. My own suggestion is that they should be decreased at a rate of not less than 20 per cent a year. Thus, in a few years more, they would cease to exist, and during that time the Bureau [of Indian Affairs] would gradually be prepared to do without them, while they might gather strength to continue without Government aid.

From this it will be seen that it was Secretary Smith's idea to reduce the contract schools at the rate of 20 per cent a year, which, if carried out, would result in their going out of existence in five years, or on the 30th of June, 1899.

Subsequently, however, the Secretary modified his views somewhat on this subject, as appears by the following extract from a communication addressed by him to Congress December 13, 1894, to wit:

It is possible that the plan of annual reduction can not be carried out to the full extent proposed, namely, 20 per cent each year.

The House of Representatives endeavored to carry out Secretary Smith's first idea by placing the following provision in the Indian appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1896:

The Secretary of the Interior may make contracts for the education of Indian pupils during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, to an extent not exceeding 80 per cent of the amount so used for the fiscal year 1895, and each succeeding year he shall proportionately so reduce the amount thus used that at the end of five years from the date on which this act goes into effect all contracts for such education shall cease.

Had this provision become law, it may be noted, the life of the contract schools would end July 1, 1900, one year later than was contemplated by Secretary Smith. But it was not enacted into law; it was not acceptable to the Senate, by which body it was amended so as to read as follows:

That the Secretary of the Interior shall make contracts, but only with present contract schools, for the education of Indian pupils during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, to an extent not exceeding 80 per centum of the amount so used for the fiscal year 1895, and the Government shall, as early as practicable, make provision for the education of Indian children in Government schools.

This provision was finally accepted by the House, and was incorporated in the Indian appropriation act for 1896, and thus became a law, which has not been changed by subsequent legislation.

It is, therefore, apparent that neither Congress nor the Executive has fixed upon a policy of limiting the existence of contract schools to five years, coupled with a 20 per cent annual reduction; it has been simply decided that the Government shall make provision at as early a day as practicable for the education of contract Indian pupils in Government schools, up to which time contracts may be granted. This was clearly manifested in the debates of the last Congress on the Indian-school question.

Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that when Secretary Smith first decided upon the policy of withdrawing aid from the contract schools it was his intention to discontinue such aid entirely at the end of five years, and upon the basis of a 20 per cent reduction each year, and that Congress was in sympathy with this plan, still it can not be gainsaid that such policy was based upon the belief, and contemplated, that the Indian Department would from year to year provide accommodations in Government schools for the pupils dismissed from the contract schools by reason of the operation of said policy. That Secretary Smith had this in view is clearly shown by his statement, in the extract above quoted, that during the time that would elapse before the contract schools went out of existence, "the Bureau of Indian Affairs would gradually be prepared to do without them." Also, by his statement in the said extract, "We need the [contract] schools now, or else we need a large appropriation to build schools to take their place;"

and is further demonstrated by the following excerpt from a report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated November 19, 1894, to the Secretary of the Interior, to wit:

By gradually reducing the contracts year by year, and placing the pupils in Government schools, or, better still, in public schools, the contract schools can be entirely done away with in the course of five or six years, and this without doing any great injury to the parties who have their money invested in contract schools, and, at the same time, provide adequate facilities for the Indian pupils. (House Ex. Doc. No. 107, Fifty-third Congress, third session.)

It soon became evident, both to Secretary Smith and to Congress, that this matter of providing the additional Government school facilities required to put into effect the new policy was not a simple thing, but that it involved the expenditure of large sums of money and many years of labor, for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as the result of an investigation made in pursuance of the following provision in the Indian appropriation act for 1896, to wit—

That the Secretary of the Interior is hereby directed to inquire into and investigate the propriety of discontinuing contract schools, and whether in his opinion, the same can be done without detriment to the education of Indian children; and that he submit to Congress at its next session the result of such investigation, including an estimate of the additional cost, if any, of substituting Government schools for contract schools—

reported to the Secretary, November 19, 1894, that—

To discontinue all contract schools in the near future, and provide Government schools in their stead, the total cost to the Government in erecting suitable buildings, such as are now being erected by this office, and furnishing the same complete ready for occupancy, to say nothing of subsistence and clothing, would be, approximately, \$1,203,060. This, however, is based upon the supposition that all buildings erected would be on the agencies where there would be no cost for the land. (House Ex. Doc. No. 107, Fifty-third Congress, third session.)

Confronted with this condition of affairs, it is not surprising to find the Secretary modifying his views somewhat, as indicated in the second extract above quoted, and Congress not disposed to commit itself to any fixed policy in regard to time.

As a matter of fact, the Indian Office has not been "gradually preparing to do without the contract schools," at least in the way expected by Secretary Smith. Indeed, quite the contrary has been the case. The truth is, the Government has not begun to provide adequate facilities for the Indian pupils discharged from the contract schools from year to year since 1895, while to-day there are nearly 5,000 children of school age on Indian reservations where contract schools are in operation for whom the Government has no educational facilities of its own, and probably will not have within the next two or three years.

From the accompanying statement, compiled from the records of the Indian Office, and duplicate of which was filed with the Senate Committee on Appropriations of the last Congress, it will be seen that at the beginning of this year there were no Government school accommodations at the points where contract schools were then in operation for 5,167 Indian children of school age. Since that date additional school facilities have been provided by the Government at only two of these points, to wit, Pine Ridge and Rosebud agencies. At no other of these points have additional accommodations been provided; and the new buildings at Pine Ridge and Rosebud, with the day schools already there, are insufficient to care for all the children belonging to these two agencies. It is true, that since the date named a number of contract school buildings have been purchased by the Government and turned

into Government schools, but negotiations for their purchase were about completed at that time, and the additional accommodations thereby provided were included in the "Capacity of Government schools," given in said statement. So that next year, as is the case this year, at no point where a contract school is now located can the Government provide for, in its own schools, the Indian pupils in attendance at contract schools, with the single exception of one point in California, noted in said statement.

The résumé of new work, taken from the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1897, herewith inclosed, confirms the above statement as to the failure of the Government to provide additional school facilities.

It is submitted that the prime consideration in this matter of Indian education is the welfare of the Indian children; that no legislation should be enacted by Congress that will deprive any Indian children of educational facilities they are now enjoying unless other educational facilities are placed at their disposal. The number of children now attending contract schools is 1,545. To allow such schools next year but 20 per cent of the amount so used in 1895 would, it is apparent, deprive one-half, i. e., 772, of those children of the means of obtaining an education; in fact, probably more, as a 50 per cent reduction upon the amount given this year would almost certainly result in closing a number of schools, for with such a meager allowance they could not exist. Obviously such action on the part of Congress would be doing these Indian pupils a grave injustice and would cripple the efficiency of the Indian school service, while it is opposed to the very spirit of the policy which has been made the excuse for the reduction.

The welfare of the Indians and the good of the service, therefore, imperatively demand that Congress make no reduction in the amount to be used for the education of Indian pupils in contract schools during the next fiscal year, but should grant the same amount as that appropriated for this year, to wit, 40 per cent of the amount used for contract schools in the fiscal year 1895.

It may be urged by those in Congress who favor a reduction that such schools as can not continue in operation might be purchased by the Government and turned into Government institutions. To this it may be said that those in charge of the contract schools would be decidedly opposed to giving up their missionary work among the Indians, even if they were obliged to discontinue their schools. They feel that such work in the past has been productive of much good in the civilization of the red man and fitting him to be a good citizen, and will continue to be in the future. To sell the schools would leave them without a "local habitation" and deprive them of the means of carrying on this work, for upon nearly all the Indian reservations all the agricultural land situated in proximity to the Indians has been taken in severalty by the Indians under the general allotment act, leaving no land available for the missionaries, who therefore can not, in justice to themselves or the Indians, agree to dispose of the property now occupied by them.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 20, 1898.*

Statement giving contract schools now in operation, with number of pupils in attendance thereat, capacity of Government schools at points where contract schools are located, school population at said localities, and number of children of school age unprovided with Government school accommodations.

State or Territory and name of school.	Location of school.	Number of pupils.	Capacity of Government schools.	School population.	Number of children unprovided with Government school accommodations.
California:					
St. Boniface's Industrial	Banning Mission Agency	75	600	740	140
St. Anthony's Boarding	San Diego Agency	75			
Day	Hopland	20	250	240	
Do	Pinole	18			
St. Turibius's Boarding	St. Turibius Mission	10			
Idaho: De Smet Mission	Cœur d'Alene Reservation	60		98	98
Michigan:					
Chippewa Boarding	Baraga	30	260	270	10
Holy Childhood	Harbor Springs	50			
Minnesota:					
Red Lake Boarding	White Earth Agency	40	945	1,925	980
St. Benedict's Orphan	do	75			
Montana:					
Holy Family Mission	Blackfeet Agency	50	200	400	200
St. Xavier's Mission	Crow Agency	50	250	427	177
St. Labre's Mission	Tongue River Agency	40	60	268	208
St. Ignatius's Mission	Flathead Agency	220		398	398
St. Paul's Mission	Fort Belknap Agency	70	160	250	90
Oklahoma:					
St. John's Boarding	Osage Agency	40	200	380	180
St. Louis's Boarding	do	50			
New Mexico: Sisters of Loretto	Bernalillo, Pueblo Agency	50	1,130	1,800	670
North Dakota: St. Mary's Boarding	Turtle Mountain Reservation	100	200	400	200
Oregon: Kate Drexel Industrial	Umatilla Agency	36	150	200	50
South Dakota:					
Inmaculate Conception Mission	Crow Creek Agency	30	420	400	(a)
Holy Rosary Mission	Pine Ridge Agency	125	b 1,400	1,515	115
St. Francis's Mission	Rosebud Agency	90	b 1,052	1,262	210
Washington:					
St. Francis's Regis	Colville Agency	50	182	500	318
Tulalip Boarding	Tulalip Agency	75	70	280	210
Wisconsin:					
Court Oreille Day	Court Oreille Reservation, La Pointe Agency	40	150	265	115
St. Mary's Boarding	Odanah, La Pointe Agency	50			
St. Mary's Day	do	15			
St. Joseph's Boarding	Green Bay Agency	65			
Bayfield Boarding	Bayfield, La Pointe Agency	30	520	1,133	613
Wyoming: St. Stephen's Mission	Shoshone Agency	50	165	350	185
Totals		1,825	8,374	13,501	5,167

a No contract in fiscal year 1898.

b A revision of this statement, based upon later reports received at the Indian Office, shows the school population of Pine Ridge to be 1,772 and Government schools' capacity about 1,300, and the school population of Rosebud 1,184 and capacity of Government schools about 800.

[Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1897.]

RÉSUMÉ OF NEW WORK.

The most elaborate of the new work of the past year has been undertaken for the Pine Ridge and Rosebud agencies, to which are attached the largest of the Sioux reservations. Their school plants are the largest and most completely appointed of any recently established on reservations. They have a rated capacity of 200 pupils each, and are intended to supply the needed boarding-school accommodations for the Indians of those agencies. Planned in accordance with modern ideas of school architecture, adapted to their especial use and surroundings, supplied with modern systems of ventilation, heating, lighting, and sewerage, they are models of the kind,

and are types of this class of schools. They will be open for the reception of pupils by the 1st of October.

At Warm Springs, Oreg., the new school building, supplied with all conveniences for 150 pupils, will be ready for the opening of school September 1. Contracts have been made for the nonreservation school for 100 pupils at Chamberlain, S. Dak., and for the Sac and Fox school at Tama, Iowa, and the buildings will soon be ready for the reception of pupils. At Red Moon Issue Station, Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency, Okla., a new school will soon open, with a full corps of teachers. The school buildings at Santee, Nebr., and the dormitory at Yakima, Wash., were burned during the year, and new buildings have been erected in their stead. A burned dormitory and a mess hall at Lemhi, Idaho, have been replaced. Material additions to the school plants at Flandreau, S. Dak., and Mount Pleasant, Mich., so as largely to increase their capacity, are now under way and will doubtless be completed at an early date; also a new school building at Cherokee, N. C. The old dormitory at Greenville, Cal., burned down, and a new one has been contracted for.

Fort Bidwell, in the northeastern corner of California, having been abandoned by the military, has been turned over to this office. At small expense it has been converted into an Indian school. The following contract schools have been purchased or leased, and are now being conducted as Government schools: Catholic boarding schools at Morris and Clontarf, Minn., and day schools at Taos, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Acoma, Isleta, and San Juan, N. Mex.; Presbyterian day schools at Jemez and Zuni, N. Mex.; and the Grace Mission Boarding School, Crow Creek Reservation, S. Dak. An old wool factory at William's ranch, Moencopi Wash, Arizona, has been purchased, and will be remodeled for Indian school purposes. After considerable delay, a new quasi-boarding school is to be erected for the Navajo Indians at Little Water, N. Mex. Plans for a new school at Vermilion Lake, Minnesota, and for the Chippewas at White Earth, Minn., are being prepared. The large school plant for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Reservation at Mount Scott, Okla., is still under consideration. At a great number of schools minor improvements of varying character have been made, so as to keep them up to the standard of efficiency.

