

Editorial—

Shocking Story At Chilocco

It is indeed shocking to learn of the alleged mistreatment of the teenage Indian students at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Chilocco School for Indians in Oklahoma. The reported beatings and the punishment of children in handcuffs suggests a middle ages approach of corrections by the officials of the school. It shows us much more. It shows us that the officials, even on the administrative level, are engrained with the dirt of discriminatory feelings against the Indian children. This was borne out by one official when he said, "Well, what can you expect, these are Indian kids."

The story as it spreads throughout Alaska's villagers is certain to bring out a variety of reactions from the villagers who have had their children sent to school at Chilocco. It may come to pass that they will be reluctant to send their children there and we don't blame them if they would so feel. Before they do send their children, the villagers may demand that a drastic change of the personnel at Chilocco take place. This in view of about 400 Alaskan youngsters go to school there each year.

The charges of mistreatment of the students have been denied by the officials at Chilocco, but not all the way. They have admitted using handcuffs on the children. We are of the opinion that the charges are more true than false. It is very likely that they had substance when it moved the highest echelon of the Bureau to look into the matter. This, in itself, is commendable of the agency to have done. It can be viewed as an effort by the BIA to clean up its own backyard.

If the Oklahoma Indian school is to receive more Alaskan youngsters in the future, we suggest that there be a sweeping change in the personnel at Chilocco. Partial changes may leave seeds for future difficulties. If changes were to be made, there should also be a good effort to upgrade the quality of the teachers to help to ensure needed quality education for the native children.

And lastly, it is indeed shameful that some native young people do get drunk during some time they attend schools. They are a shame to their parents and to their people back home. They should certainly be dealt with in a stern manner but not with cruelty. In order to steer them toward behaving, perhaps the parents of those who misbehave should be told so they may have some part in straightening out the erring youngsters. Parental reprimand does work among great many native families. Strong family ties among them tend to support this fact.