

Chilocco Indian School Officials Accused of Cruelty to Students

The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs investigators have revealed in Washington, D.C., that they have found evidences of beatings and handcuffing punishments of young Indian students by the personnel of the Chilocco School for Indians in Oklahoma.

The report was made public by Sen. Lee Metcalf, D-Montana, this week in Washington.

About 400 young Alaskan native students go to Chilocco to school each year from all parts of Alaska.

"Youngsters reported they were handcuffed for as long as 18 hours in the dormitory, handcuffed behind their back from above or around a basement pillar or from a suspended pipe," said the BIA report.

The report further claimed: "The permanent wrist scars on one youngster's arms, the deformed hand of another boy and an obviously broken and misshaped rib of another tended to

reveal the veracity of student statements."

The Chilocco school is attend-

ed by 1,050 students from 93 different Indian tribes in 23 states, about 400 of them from Alaska.

The youngsters are sent there for lack of school space in their home areas. It is said they averaged three years behind in school achievement.

The report, drafted by Charles Zellers, assistant Indian commissioner for Education under Commissioner Robert Bennett, contained general criticism of education and administrative practices at Chilocco.

The seven-man panel said: "There is evidence of criminal malpractice, not to mention both physical and mental perversion on the part of certain staff members."

"Youngsters are restrained," the report continued, "by the use of handcuffs if they have been drinking regardless of their being violent or not."

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Sen. Metcalf put it this way, "The report is a recitation of physical and mental torture administered to teen-age children. It is not a report by an outside organization or by a group of militants; rather, it is a report by BIA agency officials on an institution operated by their own agency."

The report added that one official at the school explained his actions in the following manner: "Well, what can you expect, these are Indian kids."

Since the report came out, the officials of the Chilocco have made some denials.

Dr. Leon Wall, superintendent of the school, accused the BIA seven-man panel of coming out with half truths. He said his

staff had made a sincere effort "to probe in all fairness the allegations" but had found little to substantiate the charges.

He said the report was "concocted out of partial truths."

"I think," Wall said, "the students overstated to the bureau inspectors."

He said it was sometimes necessary temporarily to handcuff a male student or a girl even "who has obtained liquor from some source."

Wall said the youngster with scars on his arms got them when he strained while being handcuffed; the boy with a broken rib got it in a fight in Arkansas City, Kan. in January of 1968; and that the boy with the misshapen hand broke it in a football game.