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INDIAN EDUCATION: A NATIONAL TRAGEDY—A NATIONAL CHALLENGE

NOVEMBER 3, 1969.—Ordered to be printed
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Mr. KENNEDY, from the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, submitted the following

REPORT

together with

SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

1. GENESIS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

An effort to "examine, investigate, and make a complete study of any and all matters pertaining to the education of Indian children" was initiated by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare late in the first session of the 90th Congress. Senate Resolution 165, agreed to on August 31, 1967, authorized the inquiry.

Through subsequent resolutions, the inquiry was extended from March 15, 1968, through January 31, 1969; Senate Resolution 80 continued the extension of the subcommittee, from February 1, 1969, through July 1, 1969. A memorandum dated January 30, 1968, from Senator Edward M. Kennedy, chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, to Senator Everett Jordan, chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration, explained the need for additional time:

> Due to a series of tragic events and unavoidable delays, the subcommittee has been unable to maintain its original timetable and important work has not been completed. The subcommittee's planned fieldwork and hearings in Alaska last spring were canceled due to the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. The tragic loss of the subcommittee's chairman in June and the subsequent election defeat of its second

chairman, Senator Wayne Morse, resulted in additional cancellations and delays. Two major hearings remain to be completed * * * fieldwork remains to be done * * *

Senate Resolution 227, agreed to on July 29, 1969, amended Senate Resolution 80 to extend until November 1, 1969, the time for the preparation of the Subcommittee's report and recommendations.

The creation of the Special Subcommittee on Indian Education may be traced to hearings conducted by the Education Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare in April 1966, to hear testimony regarding proposed amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. One amendment under consideration proposed extending the programs and services under ESEA, specifically those available through titles I, II, and III of the act, to Indian children enrolled in Federal schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A question was posed by members of the subcommittee regarding the advisability of transferring the responsibility for the education of Indian children from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. HEW and the Department of the Interior agreed to conduct a joint inquiry into that question.

This interdepartmental report was received by the Subcommittee on Education in May of 1967. It recommended that no transfer be made, and cited the recently improved coordination between the two Departments as reasons.

On July 10, 1967, Senator Paul Fannin, in a letter to Senator Wayne Morse, chairman of the Education Subcommittee, urged the establishment of a Special Subcommittee on Indian Education to supplement the work of Senator Morse's Subcommittee on Education. Senator Fannin's suggestion received the enthusiastic backing of Senator Morse and Senator Lister Hill, and the result was S. Res. 165, authorizing the special subcommittee. Senator Robert Kennedy accepted chairmanship of this new subcommittee upon its establishment.

In the meantime, the Education Subcommittee approved the Indian amendment to the ESEA, but limited the authorization to 1 year. Senate Report No. 1674 explained the decision in these words:

> The committee has limited the authorization under titles I, II, and III for the education of Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for 1 year, in contrast to other authorizations in the bill which are for 2 years. This 1 year authorization will give the committee an opportunity to consider in depth next year the education of Indians with a view to studying the transfer of control of such Indian education from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
>
> The committee feels that a thorough, professional study of Indian education by a qualified, independent agency is long overdue. Such a study was authorized by Public Law 702 of the 83d Congress, but unfortunately, no funds have been appropriated to activate the project. There is no question that Indian children should receive consideration under Federal aid to education programs equal to that of other disadvantaged groups. After more than a century of Federal paternalism, some 400,000 American Indian citizens remain trapped

> in a web of illiteracy and poverty. For example, 75 percent of adult Navajos have not learned to speak English; 15 percent of school-age Navajos are not in school. Clearly, the situation merits the special consideration which the committee intends to give it next year.

2. RATIONALE FOR SUBCOMMITTEE INVESTIGATION

The approach which the subcommittee was to take, and the areas of concern it was to outline for its attention are evident in the memorandum written by Senator Robert Kennedy to the chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration, Senator B. Everett Jordan. Writing on January 30, 1968, "to briefly state the need for extending the authorization of the Subcommittee on Indian Education from February 1, 1968, to January 31, 1969," Senator Kennedy referred to the focus of subcommittee concern as expressed in his opening statement at the committee's first hearing:

> To a substantial extent, the quality and effectiveness of Indian education is a test of this Government's understanding and commitment. The few statistics we have are the most eloquent evidence of our own failure: Approximately 16,000 children are not in school at all; dropout rates are twice the national average; the level of formal education is half the national average; Indian children, more than any other group, believe themselves to be "below average" in intelligence; Indian children in the 12th grade have the poorest self-concept of all minority groups tested; the average Indian income is $1,500—75 percent below the national average; his unemployment rate is 10 times the national average.

Citing these statistics and others, Senator Kennedy continued:

> These facts are the cold statistics which illuminate a national tragedy and a national disgrace. They demonstrate that the "First American" had become the last American with the opportunity for employment, education, a decent income, and the chance for a fulfilling and rewarding life.
>
> This subcommittee does not expect to unveil any quick and easy answers to this dilemma. But clearly, effective education lies at the heart of any lasting solution. And it must be an education that no longer presumes that cultural differences mean cultural inferiority.

3. INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURE

Following the initial exploratory hearings of the subcommittee on December 13–14, 1968, an overall plan for the subcommittee investigation was prepared which despite a number of severe dislocations and delays was carried to completion. The plan attempted to take into consideration the following facts:

1. The failure of Indian education has deep historical roots and is closely interrelated with a general failure of national policy.
2. The failure of Indian education must be examined in the context

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of the most severe poverty confronting any minority group in the United States.

3. Indian education is a cross-cultural transaction. The failure must be examined in terms of its complexity of causes and psychological and social effects.

4. Indian education has evolved a controversial and unique institution—the Federal Boarding School—which deserves special attention and concern.

5. Indian education takes place in a great diversity of geographical and cultural settings.

Based on these considerations, the plan proposed the following:

1. A detailed and thorough review of the history of Indian education in the United States, with particular attention to be paid to the development of national policy and legislation.

2. A comprehensive review of the research literature with a special concern for adequate problem definition and a delineation of the various causes of failure.

3. An on-site evaluation of a substantial sample of Federal boarding schools by subcommittee staff and professional consultants.

4. A series of field investigations in various parts of the country which would serve to place educational failure in the context of severe poverty and significant cultural differences.

5. A series of field hearings in various parts of the country which would do justice to the geographical and cultural diversity of the problem, and permit a wide range of Indian spokesmen to be heard.

6. Following the field hearings, Washington hearings, which would focus on two areas of major concern to the subcommittees:

(*a*) The extent and severity of social disorganization and emotional maladjustment in Indian communities, as both a cause and a result of educational failure—particularly boarding schools.

(*b*) The organizational failure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to work out a sound and effective education program and provide national leadership for improvement.

7. Utilization of professional consultants to investigate the organizational failure of the BIA education program, as well as the mental health problems of BIA boarding schools.

Perhaps the most important principle which this investigation embraced was simply soliciting, listening to, and respecting the opinions and concerns of Indian people across the United States. During its field investigations, school evaluations, field hearings, a variety of surveys, and extensive correspondence, the subcommittee has consulted with a substantial cross-section of American Indians. The ultimate test of this report is whether or not we have listened, understood, and given voice to their concerns and aspirations.

B. Fact Sheet

1. AUTHORIZING RESOLUTIONS

Senate Resolution 165	Aug. 31, 1967
Senate Resolution 218	Mar. 15, 1968
Senate Resolution 80	Jan. 29, 1969
Senate Resolution 227	July 29, 1969

2. SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Senator Robert F. Kennedy	Aug. 25, 1967–June 6, 1968
Senator Wayne Morse	June 14, 1968–Jan. 3, 1969
Senator Edward M. Kennedy	Feb. 1, 1969 to the present

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Washington, D.C	Dec. 14, 15, 1967
San Francisco, Calif	Jan. 4, 1968
Twin Oaks, Okla	Feb. 19, 1968
Flagstaff, Ariz	Mar. 30, 1968
Pine Ridge, S. Dak	Apr. 16, 1968
Portland, Oreg	May 24, 1968
Washington, D.C	Oct. 1, 1968
Do	Feb. 18, 19, 24, 1969
Do	Mar. 27, 1969
Fairbanks, Alaska	Apr. 11, 1969

4. FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AND RESEARCH REPORTS

Subcommittee members and staff have conducted field investigations in Indian communities and schools in the States of Idaho, California, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, South Dakota, Kansas, Oregon and Alaska. Subcommittee staff have conducted additional field investigations in Nebraska, Minnesota, Washington, Florida and Maine.

Staff fieldwork preceded and sometimes followed every formal investigation conducted by Senators on the Subcommittee.

In some instances the fieldwork lasted only a day, in most cases it lasted 3 to 5 days, and in a few instances the field work was done in depth over a period of 10 to 14 days. The following sample was drawn for the development of detailed investigative reports which have been published in a special committee print entitled "The Education of American Indians: Field Investigation and Research Reports," by subcommittee staff.

Northwest	Fort Hall Reservation
Southwest	Navajo Reservation, Arizona
Midwest	Minnesota, Oklahoma
West	California
North	Alaska
East	Maine, New York

5. FEDERAL BOARDING SCHOOL EVALUATIONS

Albuquerque Indian School	Albuquerque, N. Mex.
Busby Boarding School	Busby, Mont.
Chilocco Indian School	Chilocco, Okla.
Flandreau Indian School	Flandreau, S. Dak.
Haskell Institute	Lawrence, Kans.
Inter Mountain Indian School	Brigham City, Utah
Magdalena. BIA Dormitory	Magdalena, N. Mex.
Mt. Edgecumbe and Wrangell Institute	Alaska
Oglala Community School	Pine Ridge, S. Dak.
Phoenix Boarding School	Phoenix, Ariz.
Pierre Boarding School	Pierre, S. Dak.
Seneca Boarding School, Jones Academy	Eufala, Oklahoma
Sherman Institute	Riverside, Calif.
Stewart Indian School	Stewart, Nev.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

a. Hearings

Part 1	Washington, D.C	Dec. 14, 15, 1967
	San Francisco, Calif	Jan. 4, 1968
Part 2	Twin Oaks, Okla	Feb. 19, 1968
Part 3	Flagstaff, Ariz	Mar. 30, 1968
Part 4	Pine Ridge, S. Dak	Apr. 16, 1968
Part 5	Portland, Oreg	May 24, 1968
	Washington, D.C	Oct. 1, 1968
Part 1 (1969)	Washington, D.C	Feb. 18, 19, 24, Mar. 27, 1969
	Fairbanks, Alaska	Apr. 11, 1969
Part 2 (1969)	Appendix	

b. Committee prints

1. "The Education of American Indians: A Survey of the Research Literature," February 1969.
3. "The Education of American Indians: Field Investigation and Research Reports," October 1969.
3. "The Education of American Indians: A Compendium of Federal Boarding School Evaluations," October 1969.
4. "The Education of American Indians: A Compilation of Statutes," October 1969.
5. "The Education of American Indians: The Organization Question," November 1969.

7. CONSULTANTS

(*a*) Dr. Leon Osview, Temple University: *An Analysis of Administrative Structure, Budgeting Practice, and Personnel Factors in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Education Function.*

(*b*) Dr. James Olivero, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico: *An Evaluation of the Albuquerque Indian School.*

(*c*) Dr. Arthur L. McDonald and Dr. William D. Bliss, Montana State University: *An Evaluation of the Busby Boarding School, Busby, Montana.*

(*d*) Robert L. Leon, M.D., University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas: *An Evaluation of the Chilocco Indian School, Chilocco, Oklahoma.*

(*e*) Dr. Atilano A. Valencia, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico: *An Evaluation of the Chilocco Indian School, Chilocco, Oklahoma.*

(*f*) Francis Hamilton, Peter Petrafeso, and Rosemary Christenson, Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Minneapolis, Minnesota: *An Evaluation of the Flandreau and Pierre Indian Schools, Flandreau and Pierre, South Dakota.*

(*g*) John Bjork, Area Social Service Branch, Public Health Branch, Public Health Service, Aberdeen, South Dakota: *An Evaluation of the Flandreau and Pierre Indian Schools, Flandreau and Pierre, South Dakota.*

(*h*) Edward D. Greenwood, M.D., Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas: *An Evaluation of the Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas.*

(*i*) Dr. Patrick Lynch, Educational Service Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico: *An Evaluation of the Magdalena, BIA Dormitory, Magdalena, New Mexico.*

(*j*) Elinor B. Harvey, M.D., Juneau, Alaska: *An Evaluation of Mt. Edgecumbe Boarding School and Wrangell Institute, Alaska.*

(*k*) Dr. Harold Koch and Dr. Bert Speece, Chadron State Teachers College, Chadron, Nebraska: *An Evaluation of Oglala Community School, Pine Ridge, South Dakota.*

(*l*) Anthony E. Elite, M.D., Public Health Service, Phoenix, Arizona: *An Evaluation of the Phoenix Boarding School, Phoenix, Arizona.*

(*m*) Dr. Elwin Svenson, University of California: *An Evaluation of the Sherman Institute, Riverside, California.*

(*n*) Dr. Glen Nimnicht and Mr. Francis McKinley, and Mr. Stephen Bayne, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Berkeley, California: *An Evaluation of the Stewart Indian School, Stewart, Nevada.*