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Letter from Carl Whitman, Jr. to Representative Burdick Regarding a Shortage of Teachers on the Fort Berthold Reservation, May 8, 1958

Carl Whitman Jr.

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May 8, 1958

Air-Mail

Honorable Usher L. Burdick
Representatives of The United States
House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I have been informed that the Bureau is experiencing considerable difficulty in recruiting teachers to fill vacancies in our Federal Boarding and Day Schools. I know this is the case with day schools on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Mr. Olaf Nelson, Reservation Principal, has tried to interest teacher prospects in the work of our Indian Schools but has not succeeded very well.

The shortage of teachers is, of course, general. As it concerns the Indian Bureau, our salaries are at the level where we cannot compete against the salaries paid by public schools. For example, North Dakota generally pays \$4500 as an entrance salary for a teacher with a Degree and a \$300 raise annually for five years. This salary is paid on a nine-months' basis. The Bureau pays an entrance salary of \$4525 for a teacher with a Degree on a twelve months' basis with an annual increase for six years, of \$135.

From the above, it can be seen that the Bureau is in no position to compete on a dollar basis with public schools. In addition, it should be remembered that public school teachers work on a basis of nine months and Bureau school teachers work on a basis of twelve months. Further more, the Bureau schools must contend with the isolation factor so that actually it takes higher salaries to attract teachers to work in Bureau schools.

There is only one way out of this difficulty. Salaries need to be increased. Any support that you can give to pending 'pay increase bills' will be appreciated. It will be a service well rendered because the situation is critical.

Sincerely yours,



Carl Whitman, Jr.
Chairman, Tribal Business Council
Three Affiliated Tribes