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April 18th  
1928



Hon. E. B. Merritt  
Assistant Commissioners of Indian Affairs  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Merritt:

Last June I made a short visit to two of the western agencies, where I spent a number of years in the service. The visit to Polacca and Oraibi was particularly interesting as we had spent about three years at each of these places. The store of Tom Pavatea at Polacca is an interesting tribute to what the Hopi Indians are doing (possibly there should be an apology to the Tewa tribe in this statement as Tommy is one of their number). His store was the best by far I have ever seen on an Indian reservation and would be a credit to any white community. Mr. Pavatea has not only developed his business but in the midst of desert surroundings has built a home with modern conveniences. Twenty-two years ago, when I first went to Polacca, he only had a very small store in a very small dark building. His wonderful success shows what an Indian may do among his own people. Mr. Pavatea has accomplished this though handicapped by a lack of educational opportunity. The day school at Polacca shows splendid progress as does also the school at Oraibi. Mr. Myers has shown wonderful leadership and I believe has the confidence of the people. The fine thing in the work of Mr. Myers and Mr. Eubank is the development of native Indian ideas and culture into harmony with modern life. Twenty years of service with various tribes convinced me that the biggest element in our failure properly to fit the Indian to cope with civilized conditions has been due to the attempt to turn him into a copper-colored white man. I consider the service is exceptionally fortunate in having such men as Mr. Myers and Mr. Eubank in its employ. One unfortunate feature of the Hopi situation is the continued encroachment of the more aggressive Navajos and the apparent yielding of the government to the continued pressure of this more aggressive tribe. At Burro Springs, south of Oraibi, I found the Navajos had been at their customary tactics of forcing the Hopis from out-lying points. It seems regrettable that the Keams Canyon school

**Filed by J. M. S.**

E. B. Merritt, #2

should be turned over entirely to Navajos, leaving the Hopis with inadequate educational facilities on the reservation, notwithstanding the wonderful progress made at the day schools. The continued cutting of the washes is also a matter of some gravity. Twenty-two years ago the valley was a desert of drifting sand into which whatever rainfall there was sank and was retained. There was no wash. The wash has now cut so deep that it is a small canyon and the bottom of it has reached the level of the underground waterflow and is draining it away. In view of the fact that the Hopi Indians depend for subsistence upon agriculture and that this agriculture is possible in that desert country only in favored localities where there is a kind of sub-irrigation, there is danger that the draining of this underground water will so lower the water level that agriculture will become impossible. It might be possible by throwing dams across the sandy canyon high enough to force the water to run over the hard adobe flats to fill these arroyos and remove this danger. Some fourteen or fifteen years ago I filed with Commissioner Sells a discussion of this question. My only excuse for intruding upon your time is a deep interest in the welfare of the Hopi Indians. They are entitled to much consideration and I hope that their peaceable disposition will not result in their neglect, and also that the government will never resort to the paternalizing policy that has destroyed the self-respect of more virile tribes. As I am not personally acquainted with Commissioner Burke, I wish you would convey to him the appreciation of a former employ of the fine service which is being rendered in the Hopi villages. Six years of service with these people has left an interest that is abiding. I can not speak too highly of the fine work of Mr. Myers and Mr. Euhank.

*The encroachment by Navajos and drainage by arroyos is connected from personal observation with seeds*

With kind personal regards,

WEF:OA

Sincerely yours,

*W. E. Freeland.*