

and the period for the boys to return to us is again a time of some anxiety, for the reason that—as matters now stand—we are entirely dependent on each boy's caprice whether he will return or not, it is just the question of each, "Shall I be my own master, and run where I will about the bush; or shall I return to the Shingwauk Home to be under rules and regulations and to be scolded or punished if I don't obey?" It is really rather a wonder, looking at it in this way, that we get any boys back at all. There is no one at their backs, no one to urge them to go, their parents for the most part supremely indifferent as to whether they return or not. We really feel it to be an encouragement that so large a proportion of our boys have of their own accord, punctual to the day, returned to us. Still we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that a certain proportion—perhaps one fourth of the whole number—either do not come back on time or perhaps do not come at all. No word is sent, no letter of explanation, no word of thanks for the education, board and clothing which they have received, no offer to send back the institution clothing, no notice taken of our printed rules (copies of which are supplied to the boys) that if any pupil is to leave at midsummer, three months notice must be given by the parents, and clothing sent for them to go home in; but simply *non sunt*.

We feel this rather hard, and the result often is, on the other hand, that the Sunday-school which was supporting that boy, hearing of his non-return sees fit to withdraw its subscription, and to take no further interest in our work.

We cannot hide from our eyes the fact that other institutions have been tried and failed. Some have been given up altogether, others have been reduced to a low ebb and have risen again. That there is very great difficulty in coping with the question "How can the Indians be raised up from their present low degraded state and be made good Canadian citizens?"

certainly cannot be denied.

But because we have difficulties we do not on that account intend to give in. By God's grace we will endeavor to cope with them. Of this we are persuaded, for one thing: that the Indian boy is thoroughly capable of receiving instruction, that he has brains as good as a white boy, that he is naturally tractable, and that, if kindly and justly treated, very much may be done with him. We believe further that he is fully capable of fulfilling his duties at a future day, in the highest and most honorable positions the country has to offer.

We however think that this indisposition on the part of Indian parents to have their children properly educated is a thing that ought to engage the attention of the Indian Department. Great good has been done to the Indians, by a bold and decided step lately taken by the Department in procuring legislation whereby white people are forbidden, under severe penalties, not only to sell but even to give liquor to Indians. The preventing the use of fire-water by the Indians has been a great benefit to them. Might they not be further benefitted if some wise laws were enacted requiring the attendance of their children at school during a certain age. It seems to us that something in this way ought to be done if the Industrial School system is to prove a success.

In the meantime we would ask our friends belonging to the Sunday-schools not to let their interest in our cause flag, if sometimes the accounts of their proteges are not so encouraging as they would wish, but remember that whatever is discouraging to them is ten times more so to us, and we want them to join with us earnestly and faithfully in seeking the best good of these poor Indian children, and not to judge the work accomplished till we see hopeful young Indians mingling everywhere with the Canadian populace, and filling some of the best positions in the land.

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