

July 15, 1929.

Major George F. Ahern,
The Woodley,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Major Ahern:

Thank you very much for your kind letter about Sitting Bull. It will help me a great deal to correct some of the wild stories which have been told of the man. It is gratifying to find that wherever the man was really known, he is admired and approved.

Your suggestion that I do a book about famous Indians for the Indian schools strikes me very favorably. If I can do anything to smooth the trail for the young Indians, I want to do it. However, I have a few questions to ask about the nature of the project. I take it that the book would have to be printed by some publisher and then approved and adopted by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for use in Indian schools. Can you tell me anything about the machinery of this sort of thing? Who approves books? Who buys them? Who pays for them? Unless the publisher sees his way to a reasonable profit, it will be impossible to get it printed. There are one or two books of the sort on the market, already, though hardly so reliable and hardly adapted to Indian school use. If you can tell me about this, and give me encouragement sufficient to stimulate a publisher, I think I can undertake the job. In my opinion, it would be an act of justice and a labor due the Indian people.

We should know how many Indian school children might use the book, how many copies approximately could be disposed of annually, the general standard in price of such books paid by the Government, and so on. With such data, and a chance to land the book when published, I think we could undertake it.

And now may I ask some more questions about Sitting Bull. Perhaps some of my questions may seem trivial, but a biography is a mosaic made up of innumerable details, and the details have to be gathered, if the book is to have any value. If you find it tedious to write at length, please dictate and I will pay the stenographer.

(1) Did Sitting Bull limp? If so, was it a slight limp, or very marked? And which was his lame foot? There is a great diversity of opinion about this.

(2) Can you give me the names of visiting chiefs who came to see him? What reservations or divisions of the Sioux tribe sent delegations to see him? Do you happen to recall the approximate dates of these visits? Or any of the affairs on which he was consulted? An answer to these queries is of great value to me.