

Another thing about the Johnsons' policy is, the government reimburses the counties for the loss of taxes. See, Indian land is tax exempt. So if a family white or Indian, is living on these tax exempt lands and has children in the public schools, the government makes it up to the counties. This started during World War II when there were so many people going to work at Tinker Field and other federal installations. The government began helping the local school systems out, and the interpretation of that policy was later widened to provide aid for the counties with Indian tax exempt land.

In the elementary schools the children--Indians, whites, and negroes, are about equal. They play together and don't seem to notice the difference in the color of their skins. But in about the seventh grade the negroes, Indians and whites segregate themselves automatically. At that age they become conscious of the clothes they're wearing. They realize one boy's father is the president of the bank, etc. The Indian kids realize they're wearing shabbier clothes. They notice their skin color is different. And the Indians begin to develop an inferiority complex. They start looking at the ground. And these Indian girls mature earlier than white girls. At about 13 and 14 they're filled out, and interested in boys. Pretty soon they have an illegitimate child, and then another and the next year another. By the time a girl is eighteen she may have three or four babies. Then her problems really start, and she turns to alcohol because she can't solve them. Soon she becomes an alcoholic. Needless to say, she doesn't finish school.

For the ones that have the worst problems, if we can't improve the home situation we go to Child Welfare and recommend that the children be taken away from the parents. Welfare sends someone out to investigate, and if they agree, the kids can be taken from their home environments either temporarily or permanently. If they are taken into temporary custody, they can eventually go back home if the situation improves. But if they're taken permanently, they never go back. We try to find a foster home, a Cheyenne and Arapaho home, or we send some to the demonstration school at Concho. The boarding schools are supposed to be for the ones that are orphans. The very worst cases have to be sent to training schools or reform schools, like the one at Tecumseh.

Personally I hate boarding schools, and I hate training schools. I wish I never had to send any of the children there. But there's a place for both of them. One time I was called to find three girls that had run away from the boarding school at Concho. I finally located them at the home of relatives of one of the girls. One of the teachers had cut the hair off two of the girls, and was intending to cut the hair off the other. They were just mutilated. The hair was hacked off to the scalp in places, even the bangs were cut off. And one of the girls had put a hat on and wouldn't take it off. You never saw kids so beat. I talked to them, and took them to a beauty parlor. We tried to give them pixie cuts, but the hair was hacked so bad you couldn't really do anything with it. But I took them back to Concho and talked to the principal and to the teacher. I told them if you want to punish those girls for running away, why don't you just hack a joint off each finger each time they do it. After it would be easy to look at their fingers and know how many times they'd been caught. They promised not to cut hair again. That was really awful. Their families could have filed charges for that, but they never did.