Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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Resignation of Benjamin Reifel as area director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Aberdeen, South Dakota, was announced today by the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Reifel, who has been serving as area director at Aberdeen since 1955, submitted his resignation for personal reasons. It was effective March 11 Robert Bennett, program officer at the Aberdeen office; was designated acting area director pending appointment of a successor.

Born on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota in 1906 of German and Sioux Indian parentage, Mr. Reifel has been associated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs since 1933. After graduating from South Dakota State College at Brookings in 1932, he was appointed the following year as farm agent at the Pine Ridge Agency. From 1935 to 1942 he served as organization field agent, helping Indian tribes to form tribal or business councils under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

After four and a half years of military service, he returned to the Bureau in 1946 as tribal relations officer at Billings, Mont. In 1949 he took three years leave of absence for graduate study at Harvard University and was awarded the degree of doctor of philosophy in public administration in 1952. Following a brief tour of duty in the Bureau's Washington Office, he was named late in 1952 as superintendent of the Fort Berthold Agency, then located at Elbowwoods, North Dakota. Two years later he was transferred to the post of superintendent at Pine Ridge Agency and in 1955 he was appointed as Area Director at Aberdeen in charge of all Bureau operations in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.