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Promotion of Benjamin Reifel, a Sioux Indian and doctor of philosophy in public administration, to be area director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Aberdeen, S. Dak., was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay.

He will succeed William O. Roberts, area director at Aberdeen since February 1954, who retires on August 31 after 38 years of continuous and progressively responsible service with the Indian Bureau.

Mr. Reifel, a veteran of the Indian Service, who has been superintendent at Pine Ridge Agency, Pine Ridge, S. Dale., for the past year and a half will transfer to the Area Office on July 31. The two men will work together in the Area Office during the month of August.

Born on South Dakota's Rosebud Sioux Reservation in 1906, Reifel received his early education in the reservations schools and then went on to South Dakota State College at Brookings. He graduated there as a bachelor of science in agriculture in 1932. The following year he joined the Indian Bureau as farm agent at Pine Ridge where he took over 21 years later as superintendent. From 1935 to 1942 he was organization field agent, helping Indian tribes and bands to form tribal or business councils under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

After four and 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 his doctorate in 1952. Following a brief tour of duty in the Bureau's Washington Office, he was named superintendent of the Fort Berthold Agency, Elbowwoods, N. Dak. in 1952 and shifted to the Pine Ridge assignment in 1954.

Mr. Roberts was born in Schuyler County, Missouri, in 1890, and has been with the Bureau of Indian Affairs continuously since 1917. During his first 10 years with the Bureau he served as a teacher at Pima, Arizona, a land lease clerk at Ponca, Oklahoma, financial clerk at Pawnee Agency, Oklahoma, chief clerk at Omaha, Nebraska and Pine Ridge Agency, South Dakota, and superintendent of the Indian school at Leupp, Arizona. In 1927, he rose to the rank of agency superintendent and served in that capacity at Cheyenne River Agency, Rosebud Agency, and Pine Ridge Agency, all in South Dakota. In 1946, he moved to Muskogee, Okla., as superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency and was designated as area director in 1949. After eight years at Muskogee, he was transferred 17 months ago to the Aberdeen assignment.