Western Navajo reservation.

Moencpi Wash farm and irrigation.

DEPARTMENT OF T E INTERIOR

UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

Fort Defiance, Arizona,

October 16, 1912.

104207

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

The Moencopi Wash farm is about two and a half miles from the school, and is conducted for the dual purpose of maintenace of the school and agency, and for demonstration purposes. So far no result is in evidence as to the latter purpose, as what few Indians who now engage in farming practice their old methods. I was told that Indians who were employed on the farm and who were there required to plant in modern method would go home and plant their own crops in the old Indian way. We must expect, however, that in time they will yield to improved methods if such prove more productive. It is quite probable one reason for them not changing is that there is no one working with them in their own farm work to insist on them using better methods. The demonstration need be followed up by efforts of farmers working with the Indians.

As a maintenance project the farm is about breaking even, as best one can determine. Were it run as a private enterprise it could be made to pay, but run as a government undertaking the cost naturally runs high. But inasmuch as feed is produced there which can not be obtained elsewhere on the reservation thus necessitating importing from the railroad at great expense, farm should be

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maintained as a government enterprise until the Indians can be brought to pruduce sufficient feed to supply all demands.

A diversion dam was built across the Wash a few years ago and a canal dug at considerable expense. These were expected to provide water for the farm, and also for some Indian families living below the farm, probably two hundred acres, as best I could learn. A portion of the dam has been washed away (the second time, as I understood) and the water is now diverted at considerable expense. As it now is water is obtained for the farm only.

I recommend that the dam be replaced in time for next year's work, and that every effort be put forth to get Indians to cultivate all lands available under the project. To accomplish this some one of the farmers should be required to give special attention to it, and induce the Indians to plant and cultivate the lands. The same farmer could do much with the Hopi Indians who cultivate the lands just above the tracts referred to above. It will require great patience and percistency to get the Indians to do these things, but that such can be done is quite possible, in my judgement.

At various places in the vicinity of the Tuba school are found springs of excellent water and of such quantity as to reclaim many acres of land. There seems to be an impervious strata of rock that arrests the downward percolation of the water, causing it to break out at low points, forming these springs. The school farm and orchards are supplied in this way, as well as water for domestic use, and from others the Hopi Indians get water for their lands.

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While many of these springs are being utilized, it is certain some are not, or only slightly so. Whether these springs are found at distant points I am unable to say, if so they are a source of immense wealth to that part of the country. Wherever this water can be applied on good soil its value is, conservative speaking, one hundred dollars per acre, as fruits, vegetables and alfalfa can be grown in great abundance. With alfalfa at $25 to $50 per ton, and vegetables in proportion, the value of the water can hardly be estimated. To illustrate the possibilities and forecast what should be done one instance will be named.

The Monavi group of springs is about six miles from the school. It was an old Mormon settlement, and their old fields and orchards are yet to be seen, and several old buildings. A few Navajo families make that their principal home, cultivating a little corn and melons in their native way, and gathering the fruit from the old Mormon orchards. It gives evidence of no effort on the part of the government to improve conditions, or to even maintain what the Mormons established.

As best we could estimate there is excellent water for 100 to 150 acres of land, and very good soil can be had about a half mile below the outcroping of the springs. The Indians still use this water in a rather crude way. For the most part it is used on lands too high up, which are too susceptible to erosion, the grade being excessive: As the soil is very sandy, to try to carry the water to the choicer lands further down great waste would result through

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seepage, if the open ditch system is made use of.

What should be done? The first thing to be done is to determine the amount of water available, then the acreage this water will reclaim. A tract to include this acreage should then be selected, covering the best lands, such as will require the least water, and cut this tract up into 10-acre farms. The water should then be conducted to this tract through concrete pipes or other impervious conduits, that no loss may result, and distributed in like manner, the survey and distributing system being so made as to use the water on the land actually under cultivation and none wasted on roadways, etc.

By the time the water is ready for distribution these ten-acre tracts should be tentatively assigned to families, with a view of such becoming the main, or permanent home of such family. Five acres, or two families to the ten-acre tract would be sufficient for the home, orchard, garden and corn and vegetable tracts, but would allow nothing for alfalfa. I am inclined to the plan of ten acres to the family, for that reason, and the further reason that such families will need rely mainly of their flocks and herds, and in case of there being, say,120 acres, the community would be too large for the grazing area tributary.

Supervisors Peairs and Charles were with me when this tract was viewed, and they selected it as the future location of a day school just as soon as the plans outlined above can be put into operation. There are a number of Indian families there now a large portion of the year, but conditions are not yet ripe for the day school work. I, therefore, earnestly recommend that action be

taken to re-establish the Moencopi dam, as set forth above, and to utilize the waters of the Moenavi springs, and such other springs as may be found. But when this is done it will be absolutely necessary for farmers to be assigned to work with the Indians that the reclamation projects may be utilized. It is not sufficient that these projects be put in, for if not followed up the Indians will make very slight use of them.

I know it will be claimed that the Indians are nomadic and do not remain there long enough to build homes and utilize the lands as I have outlined. Neither would any one else live there as things now are, and neither will the Indians do things if the reservation force takes no interest in getting them to do so. But with proper inducement and under proper management they will occupy all the lands that can be reclaimed.

It is being arranged that farmers will be established over this reservation by districts, which is a great step forward. I shall soon prepare a general outline of work to give direction to the activities of these men, but one of the first things to be done from a purely farming point of view is to locate all possible water supplies where irrigation can be made possible, if in the nature of living water, such as springs, the natural flow should be measured, land looked up where the water can be used, and full reports made of all such locations. These should include the Indian population tributary, and any other useful information. If it is possible to do so the Indiansshould be induced to put in reclamation projects of their own.

Very respectfully,

Supervisor of Farming.

Carbon copy to the
Supt. Western Navajo School.

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