

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

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new project
COPY
June 24, 1941.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I have discussed with Commissioner Collier the needs and possibilities of irrigation development for the Navajos. The major project upon the San Juan River, including trans-mountain diversion for the benefit of the Rio Grande Valley, is on a cost-scale too great for the present years. But there is another group of projects, each one of them partly built already, whose completion would go far to solve the Navajos' problem, and the cost of which would be rather modest.

Within the reservation itself, an expenditure of \$509,000 would bring 6,000 acres under irrigation, increasing the Navajos' present irrigated area by fifty per cent. The cost of approximately \$65 an acre would include the "subjugation" (leveling) of the land. Subsistence farms for 800 families would be provided, and the Navajos would meet their own costs of implements and housing. This very economical result would be obtained through merely completing the partially finished Fruitland, Hogback, and Many Farms projects.

Outside of the reservation is the partially completed Colorado River project at Parker, Arizona. Here, 100,000 acres will be newly irrigated. The lands belong to the Colorado River tribe, but that tribe will allow the Navajos, and other Indians whose lands are inadequate, to colonize the project. As many as 50,000 irrigated acres can be supplied to the Navajos.

The further amount needed to complete this project is \$7,690,000, of which, however, only \$690,000 more is required for the fiscal year 1942 and \$1,100,000 for the fiscal year 1943. At this rate of appropriation, 6,000 irrigated acres could be made available for Navajos in the calendar year 1943, and each year thereafter an additional acreage up to 10,000 acres could be brought into use.

If the projects which I here describe are made possible by the Congress, the crisis which the Navajos are facing can be met. In effect, their land-base will have been expanded through irrigation

12
WR 3780

in an amount equalling the economic yield of ten million additional acres of grazing land.

The Navajos' income, Commissioner Collier tells me, was in 1940 nearly 40 per cent greater than in 1933. But the Navajo population had increased by 15 per cent since 1933, and a half-million dollars of the 1940 income represented wages for defense construction at the Fort Wingate Army Post and is, accordingly, a temporary income. The situation of this largest Indian tribe is indeed grave. Irrigation development parallels soil conservation as the dominant need and is, in fact, the only way to salvation.

You will be interested, I believe, in a document which I am enclosing. It is a report by the American Association on Indian Affairs, Inc., on Fundamentals of the Navajo Problem. It is brief, yet complete, and it is accurate.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) HAROLD L. ICKES

Secretary of the Interior.

Enclosure 2645609