

(COPY)

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Field Service

Western Navajo Indian Agency,
Tuba City, Arizona
June 12, 1951.

Mr. H. C. Neuffer, Supervising Engineer,
Fifth Irrigation District
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Neuffer:

I have just been in conference with Mr. William Zeh and Mr. A. H. Womack of your Department regarding the plans for water development on this Reservation, and from them it appears that you desire the following information:

1. What work, in our opinion, the Indians can do, and arrangements necessary for provisioning them in case they do the work.
2. What superintendents can do to control stock movements when range is developed.
3. Areas to be developed.
4. Number of dipping vats needed.
5. Construction of reservoirs by Indians.

In reply there-to I wish to submit the following:

1. We have had a great deal of experience in the employment of Indian labor on Reservation work, and as a result of this experience we do not feel that we should count on too much from them along this line for the following reasons:

(a) Indians do not provide feed for their teams during the winter months, but depend solely upon range grazing for their maintenance. The result is their teams during the winter months are always in a weakened condition, and it would require a great deal of feed as a rule before the animals would be conditioned for the work, and constant feeding while they were employed. The Indians are not prepared to take care of this situation.

WR 11755

(b) As a rule the Indian horses are entirely too small for the type of work that would be required. A team of Indian horses could not move half the dirt or stone that an ordinary farm team could, and this would make the work much more expensive, for the Indian would have to be paid enough to feed himself and his team while working and would expect a little compensation above this expense.

(c) The Indians have no equipment such as plows, scrapers and harness. These would have to be furnished from your Department and charged to the cost of the reservoirs or through my office in some way, and the cost of this equipment plus its transportation from place to place would also add an unnecessary expense since we have equipment on hands with which to do most of the work that will be required.

(d) The work to be done as a rule will be from five to fifteen miles from any trading post or source of supplies, and since Indians never have any horse feed on hands and only enough subsistence for their own families it would be impracticable and entirely too expensive to transport supplies to them for the short period of time that would be necessary for them to be employed on any of the projects.

(e) The last and most important reason for not employing Indian teams on these jobs is that there would be no water available for their teams. Reservoirs are being developed only in places where there is no water, and in many instances it would be from five to fifteen miles to the nearest supply. If the water were available we would not have to construct the tanks. This eliminates the possibility of employing Indian teams on tank work.

2. The Western Navajo Jurisdiction covers a total area of approximately 5,000 square miles. Fully fifty per cent of it is inaccessible to automobiles. We have but three stockmen to look after the entire area. It is obvious then that controlling the movement of stock on the range is going to be very difficult, if not impossible. We have repeatedly requested the establishment of additional positions, without which it is impossible to look after the range as it should be looked after. One stockman should not have to cover an area with a radius of more than twenty miles under the best conditions, and until enough positions are established to supply the need we will not be able to accomplish much along industrial lines generally.

3. On the Western Navajo Jurisdiction it is not so much a question of the specific areas to be developed each year as it is the class of development work to be done. One section of the Reservation is almost as needy as another, and instead of developing it by specific areas we would rather have different classes of work done from year to year. By this we mean spring development

WR 11756

during one year perhaps; shallow well development the next; reservoirs for a period of probably two years; and miscellaneous work to follow. If this plan could be adopted and carried out it would be far more beneficial to the range than to designate specific areas for development from year to year in that it would keep the Indians scattered over the entire Reservation and prevent their overgrazing a particular section of the Reservation in which water development had been completed. By this plan the control of the range and movement on the range would be automatic.

4. Only two dipping vats are required for this jurisdiction immediately. It is believed that as a result of the very effective work done last year scabies has been almost eliminated in this section of the Reservation; in fact, a careful check has been kept during the entire past year and not a single case of scabies has been found. If this situation remains unchanged there will be no need of an extensive dipping vat program. But we must have a new and efficient vat at Cameron in order to control the movement of sheep to and from the Reservation. This vat will have to be maintained for a period of perhaps many years since practically every sheep leaving the Reservation for the market has to pass through this port. And whether we have scabies or not, the state laws will probably require the dipping of sheep destined for points outside the State of Arizona. Another small vat should be constructed near Lee's Ferry for the same reasons given above. It is estimated that the cost of these two vats would be approximately \$4,000.

5. Due to their lack of experience and executive ability Indians cannot be relied upon or expected to do much in the way of constructing their own reservoirs. Furthermore the reasons given under paragraph No. "1" would prevent their accomplishing much along this line. They do a great deal of this kind of work, it is true, but it is on a small scale, and we encourage them and expect to continue to do so along this line as much as possible. This work should be handled chiefly by the stockmen and regular Reservation personnel.

I would not have you get the idea from the above comments that we are opposed to having the Indians do the reservoir work. On the other hand we are exceedingly desirous of having them do every bit of it they possibly can, but in formulating your general program we trust that you will not rely too much upon them for the reason that they positively cannot do the work. They can do all the hand labor and some occasional team work, and we want them employed in this manner everywhere it is possible, but what we are most interested in is getting water for them at the earliest possible date, and we feel that for their own good everything possible should be thrown into the work with a view to accomplishing it as soon as possible, for their range is rapidly being destroyed and there seems to be no possibility of their getting more except through the development of those areas that are not now available or accessible to them. To do this I think we should have heavy equipment,

WR 11757

with plenty of funds to rush the work to completion as rapidly as possible. Under this plan there will still be about as much work for Indians to do as they will be able to do.

At this time I wish to say that the sketch submitted by Messrs. Womack and Zeh showing the proposed development work for this jurisdiction is very satisfactory to me in that there are approximately two hundred projects laid out. It is hoped that funds will be provided for carrying this program to completion.

Very respectfully,

(Sgd.) C. L. WALKER

C. L. Walker,
Superintendent.

CLW-ph

cc-Mr. William Zeh,
Mr. A. H. Womack.

WR 11758