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United States Indian Service,

Navajo Agency, N.M.,

February 8, 1899.

Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington
D. C.

Sir:—

Replying to your communication of Oct. 19/89. "F. Letter 12367 '89. 43 Incls.," would say that I have carefully examined the report submitted by Lieut. Stolzenburg, and concur in the recommendations therein contained. I would specially recommend that the Spring known as Shosh-Je-to (Bear Spring), near Ganado, receive the attention which it deserves. It is located in a fine valley for farming and should by all means be placed in a condition which would insure its usefulness to the Indians. Another, which escaped the notice of Lieut. Stolzenburg, is Manuelito Spring, about 35 miles east of the agency. It is surrounded by about 1000 acres of fine farming land, which is at present useless from want of water, and is surrounded also by Indians who are the owners of

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thousands of head of stock. This spring should be dug out and walled up. The expense would be about $200, and it would be money well expended.

In regard to the item of $6934.65, which is recommended to be expended in establishing a supply of water at the agency headquarters at Fort Defiance, I would ask that it be held in abeyance. While it would be very beneficial to the school and employees I believe that at this time the money can be spent to greater advantage in providing a never failing supply of water for irrigating purposes and for the watering of stock during the dry season.

As the money heretofore expended in an attempt to establish a system of irrigation for the Navajoes was so much cash thrown away, I hope that in future work of the kind care will be taken to guard against failure. The work should be done under the supervision of a competent man, and it should all be carefully inspected as it progresses.

The Indians are ignorant of the method of irrigation proposed, and if left to themselves

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would not, or could not, keep the canals and laterals in repair, nor could they use the water to the best advantage. If irrigation is to be made a success among them they must have teachers. The department must provide two more additional farmers, making four in all on the reservation. Three of these should be placed in charge of the irrigating districts, into three of which the reservation can be advantageously divided. Each of these men should devote all his attention to the district under his charge, instructing the Indians in farming, and irrigation, and seeing to it that the ditches are kept in good repair. Unless this is done it will be useless to expend money in the construction of ditches.

I hope that the work will be commenced as soon as possible under the charge of a competent man, independent of the agent, who I believe should have nothing to say in the matter.

Respy. Your obt. servant

L. S. Vandever.

U. S. Indian Agent

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459 INDIAN OFFICE, 1892
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