

REPORT OF JOE H. NORRIS, INSPECTOR, DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR.

GENERAL INVESTIGATION OF CONDITIONS AT THE NAVAJO AGENCY
SCHOOLS, AND THAT PART OF THE NAVAJO INDIAN RESERVATION
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AT
FORT DEFIANCE, ARIZONA.

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Section *2*.

LAND - WATER.

As stated in the preceding section, much of the land is of a mountainous nature, and yet, on this vast area there are many valleys and basins of excellent soil, generally lying at an altitude of from 4,500 to 8,000 feet above the sea level, where killing frosts are frequent during a greater part of the year.

Little has been done here in the way of developing the water supply for any purpose. At Fort Defiance, Chin Lee and Littlewater, some effort is being made to at least secure a sufficient water supply for domestic purposes and for the irrigation of a small farm, with a fair degree of success.

There is not, however, in my opinion, a sufficient supply of water for any extensive system of irrigation, except at Chin Lee and Ganado.. At Chin Lee, in the valley of that name, which is at an altitude much lower than other parts of the reservation, there is an opportunity for storing the flood waters from Canon DeChelley by means of a reservoir, but whether it is feasible or not I am not prepared to say. Mr. Robinson, who has charge under Mr. Code of work of this nature in this vicinity, has I was informed made an investigation of this matter and report on the volume of water to be secured and the estimated cost of constructing canals and reservoirs. To his report your attention is respectfully invited. A similar condition exists at Ganado on the Pueblo Colorado Wash. I suggest that this matter, if it has not already been carefully investigated, be referred to one of the engineers for report.

In connection with the water supply here, I desire to invite your attention to these facts, viz., that the Navajo Indians are not in the first place a people whose tastes run particularly to farming and fruit raising. Their lands, owing to the high altitude, the lack of rain fall and the scarcity of a water supply for irrigation purposes, have not been suitable or such as to encourage agricultural and fruit raising operations. They have, therefore, long ago turned their attention to the range and sheep industry, using the water,

wherever it was to be found in streams, springs or lakes, and moving their herds, as the scarcity of water became apparent, from one range to another, making but little or no effort whatever to increase the water supply in the lakes or springs by throwing up embankments to increase the capacity of the lakes or by keeping the springs open. In but few instances have they made any effort to even preserve the natural supply of water from the springs. On the other hand, as the springs became clogged and filled in with dirt and rock and finally entirely obliterated, they would be abandoned and new water holes sought.

Last year there were over eight hundred thousand sheep dipped at the five sheep dips on this reservation, and I feel safe in saying that there is owned nearly one million sheep by the different members of the tribe located here. The Indians seem to prefer to make their living from the proceeds derived from their flocks, the weaving of blankets (which now command a good price), the making of silverware trinkets and the hauling of freight from and to the railroad to distant points.

In view of these facts, and of the present existing conditions, there are, in my opinion, two things which should have the immediate and close personal attention of the Office, namely, the improvement of the breed of their flocks both as

to the increased size and value of the sheep for mutton, and as to the improved quality of the wool, the separation of the goats from the sheep, and discouragement, as far as practicable, of the raising of goats.¹¹ At the same time, the question of the increasing and preserving of the water supply on the range for stock purposes should be taken up. In doing this, I suggest, in view of the fact that the Indians are great imitators, but slow to change their old ways, manners and customs until they have for themselves seen a practical demonstration of a thing, that in the beginning the more progressive Indians be encouraged, assisted and shown how, by a little labor, to increase the water supply in the lakes; that they be encouraged and assisted to preserve and increase the water supply from the springs already in use, by the Department furnishing the material, (cement, etc.) to properly construct cement tanks at all springs, so constructed as to prevent the springs filling up, and so as to obtain all the water available. When this is done, by some effort many new springs can be developed. At the same time many wells on the flats, in the valleys and in the basins could be sunk and placed in operation at small cost. The water will be secured at various depths of from 10 to 90 feet. With this work once fully started along practical lines, the other Indians will gradually see in it the many advantages to them in the in-

creased value of their flocks and the broadening of their range. These matters I regard as the least expensive and the most valuable part of the effort to educate and better the condition of the Indians. In such work as this there is being provided for the young Indians who attend the boarding and day schools, upon the completion of their work there something to return home to. In an isolated country like this, until something or some encouragement is advanced to such young Indians, it may be expected that the great majority of them will continue in the future as in the past to return home and take up the old ways of their fathers and forefathers.

To my mind, the establishment of these watering places on a permanent basis will tend more to lessen the nomadic habits of these Indians, of eventually establishing settled places of abode (following upon which, although probably many years in the future, other local matters such as the establishment of local schools, a little farming, building of houses, planting of orchards, etc., can be thought of) than any other thing that can be done at present.

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