

21120-1912  
D. M. H.

Navajo  
conference.

April 5, 1912.

The Secretary of the Interior,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:-

Referring to Indian Office letter of March 21, 1912,  
of above reference, regarding a report and recommendations  
as to the following excerpt from the resolutions passed at  
a conference of Supervisors on Navajo matters:

"Water should be developed on the Navajo Reservation  
wherever possible, either by sinking wells, storage,  
or the improvement of living water, special atten-  
tion being given to small storage propositions"

I beg to say that the matter was referred to Superintendent  
of Irrigation H. F. Robinson, who has charge of irrigation  
matters in that vicinity, and a copy of his report is sub-  
mitted herewith, to which your careful attention is invited.

The sentiments expressed in Mr. Robinson's report coin-  
cide exactly with those held by myself, i. e., that the con-  
tinued expenditure of time and money in improvements which  
are never used, and which are permitted to deteriorate through  
lack of attention or indifference on the part of those whose  
duty it is to attend to such matters, seems, to say the least,  
unwise and inadvisable.

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Mr. Robinson very justly raises the question "as to what extent these small projects will be utilized, and as to their future care and maintenance", and mentions a number of instances where small projects have been constructed in past years which have not been maintained "and which are not used to any extent to-day."; and he further says "I believe that in the case under discussion that before many of these small projects are built some assurance be given that they will be utilized."

Supervisor Davis, in his letter of transmittal, mentioned in Indian Office letter above referred to, refers to the practice of the Papagoes in southern Arizona. Here the Indians have for generations constructed small ponds on the desert near washes or along the principal drainage lines, and have diverted the flood waters into these ponds, to be used to water stock during the dry period. This impounded water has not been used for irrigation purposes at all. It is now, however, intended, if the plans outlined in my report on "Water Development for Papago Indians, Pima County, Arizona", are carried out, to improve somewhat upon the present system of ponds, and by increasing their number use a limited quantity of water to irrigate small garden plots. Your attention is invited to this report, and especially to the latter part beginning on page 23. You will see from the plans outlined there that the entire success of the plan proposed depends upon the co-operation of the Indians, as it is intended that the Indians shall do all the work themselves, rather than have the work done for them at Government expense, thus

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giving them a personal interest in the improvements and an incentive to develop their country by their own efforts.

A similar policy might with advantage be adopted with reference to the country with which this report has to do, i.e. indicate where the improvements should be made, provide competent supervision and such tools and material as the Indians themselves cannot furnish, but insist that the actual construction shall be done by the Indians interested in each particular piece of work. This of course will take time and persuasion rather than force, but as the Indian becomes more dependent upon his own exertions, and with the incentive of successful results, the example will not be lost upon his less ambitious brother.

Mr. Robinson suggests "that some man be assigned to the particular work of looking up such little projects", and "to secure from the Indians living around there, assurance that they will be used." It is recommended that Mr. Robinson's suggestion be adopted, and that he be requested to assign some person to this work and report his findings and recommendations to the Office for its consideration, keeping in mind the co-operation of the Indians in constructing the proposed works.

Very respectfully,

Acting Chief Engineer.

JJG/HPC.

Carbon to Supt. H. F. Robinson.  
" " Supervisor C. L. Davis.