

COPY  
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

December 7, 1929.

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Navajo  
Land Purchase

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Memorandum for the Secretary:

With reference to the land purchases on the Navajo Reservation, I wish to advise that I visited many of the areas on my recent trip to the southwest and have concluded that the present difficulty is due to lack of centralized responsibility in the field. Each superintendent seems to be handling the question under his jurisdiction regardless of a unified dominating policy. The superintendents, of course, report to Washington, where as efficient a review of the proposals as can be expected from long-distance supervision is being made. However, there are inconsistencies as between the separate jurisdictions. One superintendent may be active and inclined to extend his reservation, while another may be more conservative. Superintendent Stacher, for example, while a competent and excellent official who has been very successful in his dealings with the Indians and the whites, is inclined to extend the land-purchase proposals and the homestead-allotment provisions of the law beyond reasonable bounds. This is not said by way of criticism, for if his energies could be directed by a controlling policy good results would be accomplished.

The allotments under way in the Eastern Navajo Agency are being pushed to the point where some people think they are being overdone. This phase of the situation should also be considered in connection with the land purchases.

The impression I have gained from a personal visit to the southwest and such examination of the records as I have been able to make in Washington, leads me to believe that the present confusion and uncertainty could be corrected if the following recommendations were approved by you:

- (1) Authorize Honorable H. J. Hagerman, Commissioner of the Navajos, to take full charge of the land purchases on the Navajo Reservation. He is competent to handle this because of his standing with the Indians and the whites, and his intimate knowledge of land conditions. Commissioner Rhoads is in agreement with this recommendation.

(2) Have the Indian Office prepare a complete catalog of all lands under consideration. This should show (a) lands already purchased; (b) those for which negotiations are now under way; (c) those proposed for purchase.

(3) Expedite the payment of the Santa Fe Railroad Company for all the lands in the so-called Loupp extension.

(4) Have the Indian Office prepare for submission to you a statement of policy that should govern in the land purchases, bearing in mind your desire to avoid the undue extension of the reservation to the detriment of the taxpaying whites.

(5) Have the Indian Office submit a review of the present Navajo allotment program with recommendations for the future program.

(6) If these recommendations are followed, Governor Hagerman should be given authority to act without too much review by those of us in Washington who are not closely in touch with conditions.

(Sgd.) E. K. BURLEW

Administrative Assistant.

Dear Mr. Rhoads:

This seems sensible to me.

(Sgd.) RAY LYMAN WILBUR.