

NAVAJO AGENCY.

Fort Defiance, A.T. Dec. 16, 1899.

Hon. Board Of Indian Commissioners,

Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen: Yours of Nov. 2nd received, in which you say,—" In April, 1898, the Secretary of this Board addressed to Indian Agents a circular of inquiry as to the progress, (and the effects where completed,) of allotments of lands in severalty to Indians. The replies received have been of material use to the Commissioners, and through our Board to the public in promoting an intelligent interest in the progress of Indians toward entire self-support and active citizenship. Certain of these replies from Agents called a special attention to a matter to which we have given serious consideration, viz., the need of systematic and permanent registration of the names and allotments of all Indians whose land is allotted in severalty, and of a continuous and permanent register of marriages, births, and deaths among Indians to whom land has been allotted. The need of such a register to prevent great confusion and uncertainty as to titles, is obvious."

In compliance with the above, I have the honor to state that as to the Navajo Indians on this Reservation, there are no allot-

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ments made, and from the natural make up of the country it being at least 3/5 mountains, it would be impossible to allot lands and get any great number of the tribe located on permanent homes with sufficient lands to subsist them, while there are a few that are located and stay permanently in one place, at least 7/10 of them are roving about the country, changing their herds from one locality to another, their main support and subsistence in this country being the raising of Sheep and Goats, a limited number raise cattle also, the grass being so short and the soil so near non-productive that it would be an impossibility with the number of Indians that belong to this tribe to locate them on permanent homes on lands on this Reservation, the non-productiveness caused by lack of moisture, we have scarcely any rain during the year except in July and August, which comes too late to start up the crops and mature them, the seasons are very short here owing to the high altitude, being some 7000 feet, frosts continue late in the spring and come early in the fall, we have a few irrigation ditches that cover the most probably from 500 to 800 acres, in one locality under those ditches the Indians are cultivating and raising some corn and wheat squash and melons, but few attempt to raise potatoes, or other garden vegetables, still they are extremely fond of potatoes onion cabbage and beans, there are no lands leased on this Reservation there is not much over one half enough grass to supply the stock on the reservation, many drive their stock off into the Mexico of

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Arizona and herd them through the winter,

it is hard to answer the question as to whether the stock raising is favorable to their civilization or not for the reason that these people have never tried on any other line of business, and the general conditions are such that they never can make a living in any other way on this reservation, of course under improved and extended water system they can to some extent change their mode of living, but the country, in general is nor never will be anything but a grazing country and a very poor one at that,

as to a permanent record of births and deaths being kept there is none but I am trying to keep a record of the deaths so far as possible, but to keep a correct record would be an impossibility as we probably do not hear of one death in twenty, we keep a record of all school children who die as far as possible during vacation when they are at home a great distance we possibly do not hear of all deaths, but to keep a record of the births deaths and marriage and divorces it is as would be an impossibility as there are no regular marital obligations existing among the m, neither any form of divorce, I am using my best efforts to get these people to understand that there should be and is an obligation connected with their marriage that should be observed and trying to show them the wrong of selling their girls for wives not permitting them to choose husbands for themselves. will be pleased to answer

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any questions so far as I am able at any time and would be please
to have any suggestions placed before me that might tend to the
betterment of these people.

Very Respectfully,

W. H. Hayden
U. S. INDIAN AGENT

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