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Department of the Interior
September 24, 1896.

E. E. White
Chief Indian Division

Report of inspection of
irrigation works on the
Navajo reservation, N. M.

See to Butler Dept
and also to Williams
Agents Nov 7, 1896
L B 342
File 231

L 35764

W. C. W.

Department of the Interior
October 29, 1896
Respectfully refer to the
Commissioner of Indian
Affairs.

W. C. W.
Acting Secretary

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

WASHINGTON, September 24, 1896.

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:-

I have the honor to submit the following report:

On the 13th of August I was directed by the Secretary of the Interior to proceed to the Navajo Indian Agency, in Arizona, and inspect the irrigation work, and make myself familiar with affairs generally, on the Navajo Reservation. I was also directed to stop at Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and inspect the Indian schools at those places.

In obedience to this order I left Washington on the 18th of August and proceeded direct to Santa Fe, where I stopped one day. From Santa Fe I went direct to Fort Defiance, the seat of the Navajo Agency, arriving there on the 24th of August, and stopping at Albuquerque on the return trip.

From Fort Defiance I visited and inspected all the irrigation work on the Reservation, in company with Mr. George Butler, the Superintendent.

These works are as follows:

Bonito Creek Ditch; at the Agency; source of water supply, Bonito

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Creek; length, $1 \frac{1}{10}$ miles; width, 4 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 225 acres.

Ewles Park Ditch; 12 miles from Agency; source of water supply, spring; length, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile; reclaim, estimated, 15 acres.

Red Lake Ditch; 15 miles from Agency; source of water supply, Black Creek and surface drainage; length, $1 \frac{46}{100}$ miles; width, 4 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 800 acres.

Black Creek Ditch; 15 miles; source of water supply, Black Creek; length, $\frac{1}{4}$ miles; width, 12 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 30 acres.

Cotton Wood Pass Ditch; 26 miles; source of water supply, Eshinklizhin Creek; length, $\frac{73}{100}$ of a mile; width, 4 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 300 acres.

Wheat Fields Ditch; 45 miles; source of water supply, Wheat Fields Creek; length, $3 \frac{47}{100}$ miles; width, 4 & 5 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 300 acres.

Tsealee Ditch; 52 miles; source of water supply, Tsealee Creek; length, $3 \frac{23}{100}$ miles; width, 4 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 500 acres.

Carriso Creek Ditch; 70 miles; source of water supply, Carriso Creek; length, $1 \frac{23}{100}$ miles; width, 4 feet; will reclaim, estimated, 300 acres.

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Red Lake Dam; 12 miles; source of water supply, Black Creek and Surface drainage; length of dam, 1050 feet; height, 10 feet; width, 30 feet.

All of these ditches and the Red Lake Dam were begun and dug as far as completed by E.C.Vincent, who was Superintendent until June 30, when he was removed by Secretary Smith for incompetency, and Mr. Butler appointed in his place. As reported by Inspector McCormick on the 9th of May last, not one of these ditches has ever been completed, and all of them were badly laid out and the work on them done in the most unsystematic, irregular and ragged manner. All of them are unnecessarily crooked, uneven in grade and irregular in size, unnecessarily large in some places, and entirely too small in others. Not a drop of water is running through any of them--in fact no permanent connection has been made with the water supply in any of them, except the Agency ditch, and it is now washed out at the intake, and full of sand almost its entire length. All of them are broken in some places, and full of sand in others, so that it would cost almost as much to complete them and put them in repair as it would to dig them anew. Not an acre of land has been reclaimed or irrigated to any extent, and not one of the ditches has been completed and turned over to the Agent.

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I agree with Inspector McCormick that almost every dollar of the money spent on them has been absolutely wasted.

I found Superintendent Butler redigging the Carriso Ditch, and instructed him to continue with all his force on that work until he had completed it, and put all the water in Carriso Creek at its normal stage to running through it, and delivered it to the Agent. I suggested that he should then go to the Wheat Field and concentrate all of his force on that work until he had completed it, and put the full volume of water to running permanently through it, and delivered it to the Agent; and then go to the Red Lake and complete that work and the ditches leading therefrom, and deliver them to the Agent, and to proceed in that way from one work to another, and do one at a time in the order of their importance, in his judgment, and that of the Agent, until they were all completed and delivered to the Agent. And I would recommend that it be suggested to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to instruct the Superintendent to proceed in this way instead of suffering him to scatter his energies around on various ditches without ever completing any of them, as his predecessor did.

I also suggested to Agent Williams that as these ditches were completed he turn them over--not absolutely but for use--to the Indians cultivating lands under them, on the condition that they be kept in repair and taken care of by the Indians, free of ex-

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pense to the Government, except in cases of too great disaster from unusual floods or something of that sort. I suggested that he hold a council with the Indians interested and agree with them upon one of their number to be chief of the colony, whom he could hold responsible for the proper care of the ditch and distribution of the water among the members of the colony.

I suggested that each member should contribute to the care of the ditch, and receive water therefrom, in proportion to the amount of land which he cultivates under it; that is to say, that the member cultivating twenty acres under the ditch should contribute twice as much towards maintaining it, and receive twice as much water from it, as the one cultivating ten acres. I suggested to the Agent that there should be a distinct understanding with the Indians that when a chief failed to perform his duty faithfully he should be removed and another selected in his place, and that when any member failed to contribute his due proportion in maintaining the ditch his water supply should be shut off. I advised also that when the ditch was so turned over the Agent should send his farmer frequently during the irrigation season to instruct the Indians, and to see that the chief of the colony was taking proper care of the ditch and distributing the water equitably.

I talked to a few of the Indians under the Carriso Ditch, and

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they said they would be glad to take it on such conditions, and would keep it in good repair, and put all the water to profitable use. I have no doubt they will, because they have at their own expense, or rather by their own labor, and with the crudest implements, taken out a ditch fully as long as the one Mr. Butler is digging, and under which they have now about twenty well cultivated little farms.

Agent Williams also expressed his entire approval of this plan, and said that in the absence of instructions to the contrary he would adopt it, and undertake to carry it out. In fact he seemed to fully agree with me that it was the best that could be devised.

I recommend that this also be suggested to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for his consideration.

I was very much interested in the Navajoes, and think them deserving of all the encouragement the Government can give in the way of furnishing water for irrigation. Their Reservation is an absolutely arid country. No considerable amount of farming can be successfully done without irrigation, and the Indians have neither money nor implements, nor the scientific skill to take out as much water as they need. The Reservation is very large, and the tribe the most numerous in the United States. Grass and

water are both exceedingly scarce, for which reasons the Indians are widely scattered, hundreds of them are entirely off of the Reservation, and most of those within its limits are remote from the Agency, and many of them in almost inaccessible places.

As to Mr. Butler, the new superintendent, he seemed to be making fair progress, considering the many difficulties with which he has to contend, and I think he will make a success of the work, if he is properly looked after from time to time by Inspectors. It is my judgment that in the progress of all irrigation work of any consequence it should be specially inspected and reported upon every two or three months.

Very respectfully,

E. E. White

Chief Indian Division.