

Land-
Allotments.
Inspection
9481-1910
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,

Winslow, Arizona,
(place)

Allotments to Navajos
in Coconino Basin.

April 16, 1910.
(date)

Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated April 2, 1910, enclosing sections 2 and 3 of Inspector Will M. Tipton's report of January 27, concerning allotments to Navajo Indians in the Coconino Basin, Arizona, directing me to read the report carefully and submit remarks:

1. Concerning the advisability of constructing storage reservoirs on the Navajo Reservation to supply sufficient water for stock purposes.

2. Concerning the advisability of disapproving the allotments made to Navajo Indians west of the Little Colorado River and confining them to the reservation.

3. Concerning the advisability of prohibiting the whites from ranging their stock on the addition to the Grand Canon Forest Reserve, and making arrangements with the Forest Service for its occupancy exclusively by Navajos.

As to the first proposition, I have always thought that the allotment work among the Navajo Indians was com-

menced at the wrong end; that the possibility of developing their reservation should of been thoroughly investigated with a view of developing water sufficient not only for their stock, but more especially for irrigation purposes before any allotment work was done for this reason: In order to advance the Navajo Indians in civilization it is necessary to bring them in closer contact with those who have charge of them. A Superintendent will be given charge of say 1000 Indians, who are scattered over a large area, who earn their living by raising sheep and cattle and weaving blankets and probably cultivating a few scattering patches of corn and melons; how often do you imagine the Superintendent or his employers will come in contact with each Indian? This can be greatly simplified by developing in available places bodies of land that can be irrigated ranging in size from a few hundred to thousands of acres, and communities of Indians located thereon. These communities would range in number from a few hundred to several thousand Indians. In each community could be located a farmer or several farmers and a demonstration farm where the Indians could learn what was possible for them to do. This of course would require some money, but the results would justify the initial expense. A large part of the original expense could be returned to the Government by the Indians by paying in small payments for a part of the benefits they would receive. The obligation the Indians would assume would be a benefit to them instead of a detriment in that it would occupy their mind and time with things of their own material

advancement. At present the way of making their living is by grazing sheep and weaving blankets, which work is principally done by the women and children who are the real bread winners of the Navajo Indians, while the men have a few horses and some cattle which they care for most of the time. The greater part of the subsistence of a Navajo family is earned by the women. The time of the men is spent in gambling, practicing the deceits of the Medicine Man and dancing. Is there a race of people in the history of civilization who have made national advancement whose women were the bread winners? The Navajomen when properly directed is a good worker, but he needs more personal directions than it is possible for him to receive under the present conditions; and I believe if they are gathered in closely settled communities that their energies could be directed in the right channel, and the men instead of the women would become the bread winners, and until this is done they will be nothing more ^{than} nomadic people without any aim in life. I

I certainly can recommend that reservoirs be constructed on the Navajo Reservation, not only for their stock, but for irrigation purposes also.

As to the advisability of disapproving the allotments made to the Navajos west of the Little Colorado River, I would think if the conditions of the foregoing is carried out, these allotments would be unnecessary. As I stated in a former report ~~port~~ these allotments are practically worthless within

themselves, but with the additional country which they control are of some value for grazing purposes only. I do not believe that there is one allotment in the entire 115 that will furnish sufficient subsistence to provide for our Indians. The white men who have made settlement in that locality have all left there, and not one at this time is residing within thirty miles of any of these allotments. The entire matter boiled down comes to the one proposition, which is, whether a few white men will be allowed public range free for a few more cattle and sheep, or 115 Indians a home where they can exist. If the first proposition is carried out, better homes can be provided for these Indians and I believe should be done and this constant complaint ended.

As to your third proposition I believe would be the best solution if the first proposition does not meet with your approval, provided the addition (which by the way is a farce in so far as being a Forest Reservation, and was created at the request of the stockmen in order to prevent the allotment of Indians who were residing there, and not for the purpose of protecting the forests) will provide sufficient feed for the additional stock of the Indians who have been allotted, or at least it would be a good temporary arrangement until some place on the reservation was provided for them where they would be under the supervision of the Superintendent.

I have read Inspector Tipton's report carefully, and find his report to be a very fair one. I note what he says in regard to the allottees not living upon their allotments,

This condition is not surprising to me, nor would it be with anyone familiar with that country in the month of August when he visited the allotments. I will state that these Indians have promised me that they would build hogans and live upon their allotments if they would be protected in their rights. They of course know that there is some doubt whether they will be allowed to remain there, and consequently are not making their improvements as they agreed to do, but I believe they will do so just as soon as they know they will be protected. I do not see any testimony in Inspector Tipton's report of one Indian interested. I believe that both sides should have the same fair treatment in this investigation as has been accorded the white men who are interested. While the Indian's testimony is as a rule not very reliable, yet there is some testimony given in Inspector Tipton's report from white men who are no more reliable than a Navajo Indian. I am told that the Indians who are interested in these allotments will be satisfied with your decision, provided they are allowed to present their side of the proposition, which appears to me to be just.

Very respectfully,

George A. Keepers,

ASpecial Allotting Agent.