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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

Shiprock, N.M., July 8th 1924

The Honorable Charles H. Burke,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Dear Mr. Commissioner:

I came up here from Gallup on Sunday the 5th.

The Navajo Tribal Council called for the seventh was duly held on that date. All the delegates and alternates with the exception of the two alternates from the Western Navajo Jurisdiction were present. During the past year Jim Blackgoat, an alternate from the Navajo Jurisdiction, died, and no one has yet been elected to fill that vacancy. Baddy Martine, the alternate from the Pueblo Bomito jurisdiction, resigned, and William Antoine, a young educated Indian and a very good man, was elected there in his place. He was present at the Council here. There have been no changes in the personnel of the Council during the year, besides these.

Chee Dodge, Chairman of the Council attended. Mrs. Charles L. Campbell, wife of the missionary here was named Secretary of the meeting, and Frank Walker interpreter, with Dashna Clahcheschillige and J. C. Morgan, assistant interpreters. In fact Chee Dodge did a good deal of the interpreting.

Superintendents, Kneale, Parquette and Stacher attended the meeting. The meeting was held on the campus under the trees. It was called to order at nine in the morning and continued until half past five in the afternoon with an hour out for lunch.

A complete stenographic report of all the proceedings was not possible as there was a great deal of free discussion by the delegates in the Navajo language which it was not possible to fully report. I will, however, later send in as full a report of the proceedings as I can.

Taking your letter of June 28th (45197-24) as a basis of discussion, I opened the meeting, with a full and very frank report of what had been done during the past year in the way of oil development on the treaty reservation under the authority extended to me by the Toadelta resolutions of a year ago, and then went very fully into the matter of industrial development as more particularly outlined in your letter, stressing particularly the need of getting rid of useless ponies and of breeding up the reservation sheep by the introduction of first class rams.

W. N. H. 14

*my memo
L. Campbell
July 9
B. N. W. H. 14*



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I linked this up with the matter of the Navajo Extension and to told them very clearly that one of the main reasons for the failure to secure the assent of Congress to the bill providing for the Extension was the fact that, in the opinion of many people in Washington and elsewhere, the Government is not justified ~~in~~ granting more grazing lands to the Navajos until they make the best use of the lands they already have, and that the continued large numbers of useless horses was the greatest handicap to them in securing what they want in the way of more land. I did not tell them that that was the only reason for the failure to get the extension but that the white sheep men who desire that range have the best sort of an argument in support of their opposition in this horse matter and that, of course, they do not fail to use that argument to the fullest extent, and that, in fact, whether these white men are actuated by merely selfish motives or not, the situation, in a larger way, has actually gotten down to the question of the Navajoes consenting to reduce the number of their horses very materially if they hope to get any further ranges outside the present reservation.

I then went fully into the matter of better sheep and more wool, and, in a very personal and friendly way talked to them on that subject, as one who is personally interested in the sheep business in New Mexico. I told them that we had just finished clipping some 11000 sheep on a ranch in which I am interested and had averaged $9\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of wool per head for the whole bunch, and that while it was not to be expected that they could ever do as well as that under the conditions which prevail here there was a tremendous spread between that and the three or three and a half pounds of wool which, according to the best information we can get, is the average clip here. I urged upon them at length the great necessity of improving their stock and of adopting better range methods as fast as possible. I, however, warned them that in the campaign for better wool and mutton sheep they should not overlook the fact that it might be quite possible to breed their sheep up to too fine a point, thereby losing some of the very desirable qualities of endurance which makes the rough Navajo sheep so hardy and so well suited to the tough conditions which prevail in this country. The ideal to attain and work towards is an animal with the greatest amount of endurance and to produce the maximum amount of wool and mutton consistent with endurance and resistance to the general tough conditions prevailing here. I mentioned to them the possibility that a Karakule cross with some of the old type Navajo sheep might prove a very useful experiment. That is a matter which I will take up more fully later with the office.

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In connection with range improvement I went pretty fully into the question of waterings on the reservation and urged upon them the absolute necessity of better cooperation on the part of the Indians with the government men in keeping up the waterings after the Government had developed them. The Government, I told them, cannot be expected to do it all. It has spent a very large sum of money in digging wells, installing windmills, digging tanks and developing springs, and is still doing so, but it is about useless to do this if these waterings are not kept in order after they are developed, and, as this development is for the benefit only of the Indians themselves we expect them to cooperate fully in the maintaining of these waterings. I told them I had had a good deal of experience myself in this phase of the stock business - which is true - and that when we developed a well, or a waterhole we kept it in the most efficient condition by constant attention - otherwise it was a drag and a nuisance - that in many places on the reservation I had seen wells and tanks in bad shape, water wasting, dead sheep and dead horses in the tanks, broken fences et cetera. The Department under the direction of Mr. Womack (Mr. Womack was present) was doing a great deal in maintaining these waterings, but with the force he has available he cannot possibly do it all. One of his men has about thirty wells to look after, another over forty, and it is quite impossible with such a force to keep them all up as they should be kept up - that they cannot be properly kept up unless the Indians themselves do a great deal more than they have done to help him keep them up. They are doing something in that line but nowhere near enough. They should give this matter careful thought and get it thoroughly into their heads that they must help themselves along these lines if they expect further water development and if they hope for more grazing land.

After these remarks, in which the delegates and the many other Indians present seemed very keenly interested, a general discussion followed in the Navajo language. There was not very much said by them in regard to the oil developments at the morning session; they said they had confidence that the Government was doing everything that could be done along the lines promised at the Toadlena conference, and that while they were disappointed at the results on the Tocito and the Table Mesa they hoped that further exploration elsewhere would result better. They asked if the lessees on the Tocito had abandoned their lease and I told them they not. They were much interested in knowing that the water well on the Tocito and probably that on the Table Mesa would permanently go to the Indians. *had*

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They then brought up the matter of oil development on the Treaty Strip east of the reservation, which I had not yet mentioned in my remarks. With this some of the delegates seemed pretty intelligently in touch. The gist of considerable discussion in respect to this business was that they are very anxious to see the strip tested and also the non-treaty lands to the west, and that they want this test as soon as possible- also that they want to get the full royalties from these lands if oil is discovered on them- if they possibly can get them all- that they are standing behind the Indian Office in its efforts to get all the royalties and will continue to so stand- until or unless they find it is impossible to get all the royalties- but that if it transpires that Congress (providing it proves to be a question for Congress to determine) will not give them all the royalties they will let down in their demand for all the royalties, if they are forced to, to the extent of dividing with the states and the government on a 50/50 basis but that they would not stand for any less than 50%. Of course I didn't think it necessary to tell them that the question would probably be ultimately settled irrespective of what they think about it- because I do think their views and their wishes should be given consideration, and I told them that I would present to Washington their point of view and tell you that they were giving the matter intelligent and thoughtful consideration.

They are much disappointed about the failure of the Crown Point Extension, and while they were not ready, at the morning session, to answer me very fully about the horse business they did put themselves on record, as far as the Extension is concerned, to the effect that they had no desire whatever to ask for any rights on the proposed area of the Extension except the grazing rights, that they asked only for the grazing privileges there, and are perfectly willing that if there is oil there, outside the allotted lands that the white man shall have it under such arrangements as Washington may desire to impose. A resolution to that effect was passed and unanimously adopted as will more fully appear in the minutes of the meeting.

Their main interest in response to my remarks was in the matter of more and better bucks. They all want more, are anxious for many more, and want me to get the Office to tell them in detail how they can get them. Only a few of them are able to go out and buy them; they want the government to do a great deal more than it has done in giving them the opportunity to get them. One or two of the delegates intimated that they thought the Government ought to furnish them with bucks but this suggestion was immediately repudiated by the Council as a whole and the sentiment was general that they did not want anything free, they were willing to pay for good bucks. Chee said that numbers of the Indians are quite well able to pay outright for bucks, that many others will not be able to pay for them all in cash and that what we ought to

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do is to devise some method whereby at the various superintendencies or at Gallup or Farmington or other convenient points on or near the reservation a stock of bucks should be on hand at the proper season for the Indians to purchase, through the agents, and that provisions should be made for the payment by installments by such individuals as could not pay all in cash. A good deal in this way has already been accomplished here and at Crown Point but they want a great deal more of it and they want it right away- next year.

I told them that the office had assented to and approved the plan to start thoroughbred herds at Ft Apache and at Wingate but this is so far in the future that it does not mean much to them and they want immediate action. They are willing and more than willing to acquiesce in your suggestions but they want to be given a definite plan on which to work it out.

At the afternoon session they brought up the matter again in connection with the disposal which is to be made of the bonus and royalties accruing to the Tribal Funds from the oil leases and passed a resolution to the effect that it was their desire that \$100,000 of this fund if as much as that should become available, should be used in the purchase of bucks for the Tribe. This will more fully appear in the minutes of the meeting. I told them that I did not know how this matter could be worked out but that I would put it up to the Office with a view of trying to work out a plan in accordance with their desire, as I considered it about the most important phase of Navajo development. I will take occasion in the near future to write the Office more fully on this matter.

Chee and others spoke to me in private about the dance and religious questions, intimating that it was a delicate matter which should be treated carefully. However, at the opening of the afternoon session I went into that and read to them certain portions of Secretary Work's article in the Saturday Evening Post, as a text for my remarks. I did not attempt to read it all, as I thought they would not be able to grasp it all but confined myself especially to the following sentences of the Secretary's statement:-

"The Government is not attempting to supplant Indian religion with other forms of worship, but approves of efforts to modify its ordinances into harmony with the forms of the Christian religion which civilization has approved, from which our rules of life are drafted and upon which our Government is founded.

Nor is the Indian Bureau attempting to prohibit Indian dances, either as a secular or religious

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ceremony, or as an amusement but hopes through rising intelligence and a fuller education that the Indian may be reasoned away from" certain practises.

"I deprecate as ill-advised the attitude of those who would detain the Indian in his primitive state, and who would idle spy on his religious festivals or exhibit his ceremonies to the curious for a fee"

I attempted to see to it that these statements were very clearly interpreted to them and they were very greatly interested, as was quite apparent, especially in the last sentence quoted. Chee had said that he thought it wrong for the Department to try to prohibit dances and at the same time to permit the Indians to go out to the fiestas everywhere and dance these same dances for pay. All the Indians there stated that they strongly deprecated these shows, that, as far as the Navajoes were concerned, only "bums" and no-goods took part in them and wanted to know what I would do to stop them. I told them very plainly that it was up to them to stop them by not going to them or lending encouragements to them, that that was their affair, they knew now what the Secretary and the office and what I thought of them and I would leave the matter in their hands to act in regard to it as they saw fit, that I didn't like it any more than the Secretary, that I thought it was infra dig. but that we couldn't prohibit them from exhibiting themselves at the white man's shows for money if they wanted to- that that was their affair, but that it seemed to me they didn't take their ceremonies very seriously if they were willing to make a show of them for money, that what the Government was interested in was to give them every opportunity to become Christians if they want to and that we were not favorable to customs or ceremonies and sings if they actually interfered with the health and sanitary measures which the Government is inaugurating for the stamping out of trachoma, tuberculosis and other disease amongst the Indians. This was as far as I went towards jumping on the Medicin Men and their practises, and as far as I thought it wise to go at this time. On the whole these remarks were very well received indeed and will doubtless sink in and be thoroughly discussed all over the reservation. What the Secretary has said will be very fully considered, I am sure.

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This led to a discussion of the measures which are being taken by the Office for the eradication of trachoma and the campaign now started on the Navajo jurisdiction. I have not been advised at all since the Gallup conference as to the details of what has been determined upon in this line and so could not respond to their inquiries except in a general way- in fact was not a little handicapped by the failure of the office to tell me what the program actually is but I told them that these measures for their success must depend in a very great measure, upon the cooperation of the Indians themselves and that we expected them to respond cordially when called upon to all measures inaugurated by the Government. I also spoke of the possibility that the Red Cross would establish additional centers in various parts of the reservation to help the Indians in sanitary ways. To all of this the delegates promised their hearty support. They fully realize the seriousness of the situation in regard to both trachoma and tuberculosis. Some of these men, who were in the war, know what the red cross is and will respond to any activities which that organization may inaugurate as well as to the offices activities sincerely and actively as soon as they know what they are.

This led to the opening up of the question of the outside school and the effect that the sending away of children has on their health. It was brought up by one of the delegates who spoke very forceably and very convincingly on that line. He said that again and again children who had been taken to some of the non-reservation schools had, because of the change of climate and because of their loneliness and homesickness contracted tuberculosis and either died before they got home and had come home and died. He said this was pitiful and sad and ought not to be, that he wanted the Navajo children, especially the young ones kept in the reservation schools, unless they showed a desire when they reached an age when they knew what they wanted to go out for further education along lines that would do them good; that it was wrong to go and take these children forceably against their and their parents wish- all wrong- that it should be changed, the parents should be consulted. He stated very definitely a point of view which had not before been brought to my attention and that was that the sending of the girls to the outside schools and long separation from their families and their clans often resulted in their marrying within the clan before or after their return to the reservation, a practice contrary to the custom of the Navajos and a practice bad in itself which the Navajoes deprecated and which results badly from every point of view. It isn't right, he said, to marry your own relations.

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This speech led to a very general discussion and ended up in the passage of a resolution strongly favoring the retention of the children in the reservation schools and not sending them outside except with the consent of the parents. I told them that I was very much in sympathy with their point of view and that I would so state to the Office but that they should also remember that the Government was increasing the capacity of the inside schools. What they want is to be consulted as to their children before they are taken to school, within or without the reservation. They object to the arbitrary way in which it is done. They are all in accord as to that, as far as I can see. They want more things taught them that will be useful to them in the solution of their own problems, especially their industrial problems.

They remarked that the fault was not with the superintendents, that the superintendents were ordered from Washington to get a certain number of children to send away to fill the schools and that they simply had to do it, whether they wanted to or not, or whether the children were actually ready or not or willing or prepared or fit to go.

This question is becoming constantly more tense and difficult and should be seriously considered if the Government hopes to get results in any way commensurate with the money and effort now being expended in Navajo education.

Another matter brought up in the afternoon was that of the participation in the Navajo Tribal fund of allotted Indians outside the reservation and a resolution was introduced and unanimously passed to the effect that the tribe as a whole should hold oil, gas and minerals in common whether discovered on the reservation or on Navajo allotments. The Indians here who hold allotments signed a paper adhering to this plan. A copy of this paper is herewith enclosed for the records of the Office. This resolution was drawn up by Deshna one of the delegates from this jurisdiction. I should be glad to have the views of the office as to this matter.

It was also resolved that, if possible, \$5000 of the royalties should be appropriated annually to pay rentals on railroad lands leased to the Navajos outside the reservation.

The matter of a certain Indian Judge in the Navajo Jurisdiction was brought up at the meeting. I think it best to ~~matter~~ make this a subject of a separate communication. It is very serious.

The delegates have all started home to-day. They all expressed themselves as well pleased with the Council. It seems to me that it was very successful and useful in many ways.

Respectfully yours,

H. Laguarda
Commissioner to the Navajo Tribe

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Shiprock, New Mexico,
July 7, 1924.

We the undersigned, Navajo Indians, holding allotments on the public domain in the vicinity of the Navajo country were present at the meeting of the Tribal Council at Shiprock, New Mexico on July 7th, 1924. We voted for and hereby adhere to the following resolutions passed by the said Council.

Resolved that in the name of the Navajo Tribal Council that the Navajo Tribe as a whole should hold oil, gas and other minerals in common whether the said oil, gas and minerals are in the treaty lands, or on individual allotments and that all allottees outside the reservation be requested, as a condition of sharing in the benefits of the tribal fund, to adhere to this proposal, insofar as it affects their particular allotment.

Signed:

William Patrol

Becuti Begai (his mark)

Hosien Begodi Begai

Pohkai Kai Etocin

Son Jansen

Jochini Bikanji