

No. 2.

NEEAH BAY INDIAN AGENCY,
Washington Territory, September 1, 1871.

SIR: When I assumed charge of this reservation, on the 1st of June last, I found it in a very unsatisfactory condition; two of the employés were away—the farmer for the purpose of purchasing cattle for his own use, and the blacksmith for the purpose of cultivating land of his own. Upon their return I immediately discharged them and appointed others.

There were thirty-eight head of cattle belonging to the reservation; they were all grazing upon the prairie with quite a large herd of other cattle, and in the absence of the farmer it was almost impossible to tell which the Government cattle were, as some of them had not been branded; they were looking well and are in good condition now.

The buildings were very much out of repair, and presented rather a dilapidated appearance; they consist of a dwelling-house for the agent, a small house for the employés, a school-house, stable, canoe-house, and wood-sheds. There is also a farm-house, a tolerable good log barn, with comfortable cattle-sheds, and other out-buildings upon the farm, about three miles from the first-named group. The farm-house is in bad condition, and will require repairing before it is fit for occupation. I have had all the other buildings repaired, thoroughly whitewashed, and painted so far as I had material for that purpose.

In consequence of the lack of building-room, one apartment in the

house occupied by the employés has to be used as a blacksmith shop, and a part of the stable has to be used as a carpenter shop. The agent's house was built to be used as a carpenter shop, but was afterward converted into a dwelling-house; it is small and very inconveniently arranged. The agent under whose direction the buildings were erected never resided upon the reservation, and consequently there was no necessity for a dwelling-house for him.

The artisans' tools and agricultural implements were in bad condition, being rusty and some of them almost unfit for use; they were scattered over the place in a very careless manner; the plows are of a very old pattern, and would not be used by any respectable farmer of the present day.

A crop of about 18 acres of potatoes, 5 acres of oats, 2 acres of cabbages, carrots, turnips, and other garden vegetables had been planted, but had made but little progress, and the weeds had grown so thick and fast that it looked like a very successful attempt to raise a crop of that kind. The employés, and much of the time two or three Indians, have been at work almost constantly, plowing, hoeing, and pulling weeds, and we have succeeded in making a pretty fair crop, but not more than half what could have been raised had the seed been properly put in and attended to early in the season. I estimate the harvest as follows: Potatoes, 2,700 bushels; turnips, 100 bushels; carrots, 75 bushels; beets, 10 bushels; cabbages, 1,000 pounds; oats made into hay, 3 tons.

It is impossible to know how many acres the Indians have in potatoes, as they are in little patches scattered ten or fifteen miles along the coast, but I should think at least fifteen acres. They are entirely unskilled in agricultural science, and do not produce more than one-fourth of an average crop; they know but little about using the hoe, and it seems almost impossible to learn them.

Most of the Indians have been away nearly all summer catching and drying fish. They have been peaceable and quiet excepting on several occasions when whisky was brought among them and a number of them became intoxicated. The whisky is generally brought here by Indians who live on Vancouver's Island, and with whom the Makahs carry on commercial and social intercourse. Many of the Makahs will not drink whisky, but most of them are very fond of it, and will drink whenever they can procure it, and, if not punished, would soon become unmanageable and dangerous. At present there is no way to punish them except to send them away to prison, which would involve a great deal of time, trouble, and expense. A block-house should be built at the agency.

A mild form of slavery still exists among them, and it seems almost impossible to abolish the system; those held as slaves fare as well as their masters, and will not leave them. I endeavor to convince them that they all have equal rights and privileges. They have but vague ideas of morality and religion; polygamy, pressing the heads of infants, and gambling are customs they cling to very tenaciously, and it will take some time to obliterate them.

The general health has been very good, but many of them are afflicted with scrofulous diseases which are so deeply rooted in the system, that they seem to be incurable in many cases.

When the agency was established, it was discovered that there was no agricultural land upon the reservation, and not even a suitable place for the erection of necessary buildings for the agency; therefore the agent recommended that the reservation be enlarged, in order that the provision in the treaty for the establishment of a farm for the

benefit of the Indians might be carried into effect. A survey was accordingly made (as I am informed) by direction of the agent, and a tract containing about 3,500 acres of land was added to the reservation; upon which there is a small marsh-prairie, which affords good pasturage for the cattle all the year, and without which they would have to be sold or otherwise disposed of. The reservation farm and all the improvements that have been made, with the exception of the school-house, are upon ground included in this addition to the reservation.

Recently several persons, some of whom were formerly employes upon the reservation, have taken claims upon this land, and have brought quite a large number of cattle upon it, and they have informed me that they would not have done so had they not been informed by my predecessor that they had a perfect right to take the land. The Indians claim this land, and most of them live upon it, and they will not relinquish it willingly; it is very embarrassing to me, as I have no authority to order them away, and they are encroaching upon what has always been considered a part of the reservation. It is a matter of actual and pressing necessity that the Government should settle the question as to whether this land, upon which most of the money appropriated for these Indians have been expended, is or is not to be a part of the reservation. Nearly all the arable land of the reserve is upon this addition, and without it nothing can ever be done by these Indians in the way of farming.

When I came here I found a poorly organized school of nine male scholars. There were only six in regular attendance, and they had made but little progress. They were able to read a little in the first reader, and spell words of three or four letters. I regard the school as the most important part of the Indian service, and have done all I could to aid the teacher in reorganizing and enlarging it; and although it is almost impossible to induce the children to attend, I have strong hopes that great improvement will be made during the coming winter. At present there are sixteen scholars in attendance. The parents, with few exceptions, do not want their children to attend school, or be like white people.

I think the school here has been more in name than in reality, as I do not find any of the older Indians who are able to read or write, and the moral influences of civilization have evidently never been brought to bear upon them.

Nature supplies them abundantly with nearly all the necessaries of life; consequently they do not appreciate what they receive from the Government. They are the most happy and independent people I have ever seen. They catch plenty of the finest fish, which they dry in great abundance for winter use. They take several kinds of shell-fish, which are unlike anything I have ever before seen, and which they eat with great relish. They catch a great many dog-fish, from which they make oil; and seal, from which they obtain both fur and oil, which they barter to the white traders for clothing, flour, and such other articles as they may need.

I would recommend that an appropriation of \$2,500 be made for the purpose of building a saw-mill upon this reservation. With that amount a mill could be constructed of sufficient capacity to supply all the lumber needed upon the reservation, and for building houses for the Indians, which they greatly need. At present all the lumber used upon the reservation is brought a distance of more than a hundred miles. These Indians have no means for the conveyance of lumber except by canoes, which is extremely hazardous, and requires a great deal of time. If

lumber was easily obtained, they would all gladly build new houses; and if such buildings should be constructed as are actually needed upon the reservation, it will be a great saving to the Government in the end.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. M. GIBSON,

United States Indian Agent.

Hon. T. J. McKENNY,

Superintendent of Indian Affairs,

Olympia, Washington Territory.
