

NEAH BAY INDIAN RESERVATION, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
August 18, 1877.

SIR: As directed by your circular dated July 10, 1877, I proceed to communicate such facts respecting the condition and prospects of affairs in my agency as are proper to be embodied in this my fourth annual report.

It would be gratifying, if the facts would justify it, to report as the result of my three years' residence with the *Makah* Indians radical improvements in their character and manner of life. To this end the Government has been incurring large expense for many years, and the country is impatiently waiting for the promised harvest of social reform, of moral regeneration, and of material prosperity among these burdensome people.

I do not claim to have produced any very marked results upon the tribe under my control as yet. If my work should be soon interrupted, the fruit of it in all probability would not long be visible. What I do claim is that a system of measures has been introduced looking to the ultimate overthrow of barbarism, and the ultimate establishment of civilized life among these people; a system of measures which have never failed, when properly encouraged and faithfully and continuously carried out, to improve and ameliorate the condition of whatever savage race has been made the subject of them.

I did not undertake this work with the expectation of rapid improvement in the manners of the adult Indians. I did not expect them to abandon their rude lodges suddenly or to take on the customs or costumes of civilized people. To reconstruct the domestic life and social habits of any barbarous race is the work of a generation. * * * To prepare this or any other savage people for these high results, the work must begin in childhood. And it is not enough that the children be sent to school three or six or nine months in a year for a few years, dwelling meanwhile in their native camps and imbibing the influence of their savage surroundings. * * * I therefore started out with the plan of separating the children to the utmost extent of my ability from the home and influence of their parents; the plan of taking them entirely out of Indian life and putting them at once and entirely into civilized life.

In carrying out this purpose I have had to encounter the most persistent and unanimous opposition of the tribe. For more than a year I depended upon persuasive measures, preferring, if possible, to win the children to me and bring the parents into sympathy with my work by kindness rather than by coercion. Finding, at length, that I could not do this, I resolved to take high ground with them and carry the point by force. The first trial was a severe one and was made a test of the principle of coercion. It resulted in the surrender of the child demanded after the offender had lain two nights and one day in prison, and effectually settled the controversy with the whole tribe. Seeing that I was in earnest, that withholding their children would only subject them to punishment, they no longer confronted me with positive refusal, but yielded to the requirement with great reluctance and after exhausting every device imaginable to induce me to yield to their wishes. Still, when once the point was gained, there was in every instance an end to the issue. The children, finding themselves comfortably situated and kindly treated, soon became content and happy, and the parents seem to abate all their opposition, and acquiesce in a friendly spirit.

I inaugurated the school in my own family, and have continued it thus far under my own personal supervision. My house is the home of the children. To me and to my wife then look for protection and for parental guidance. Teachers and other employes in the school are merely assistants to carry out our plans and help us do whatever we find needful to be done. A change of teachers works no change in the system of the school. If a teacher resigns, or for any cause be disabled, the children do not, on that account, scatter to the camps. The children are still at home in our family, and upon us devolves the superadded labor of their instruction until other help can be obtained. It is only by these means that I can expect permanently good results. There must be a plan, for the permanent carrying out of which somebody must be responsible, and other things being equal, the agent himself is better situated for it than any one else.

As to the results of the school, thus far, it is enough to say that they are such as to greatly encourage us. The majority of the pupils are young children, and are yet in the elementary lessons. The older pupils, who have been longest with us, have made creditable proficiency in reading, writing, and in numbers. They have been practiced in most kinds of domestic work; the boys in gardening, hauling and cutting wood, and in general chores; the girls in housekeeping and needle-work. In personal habits and moral character, while there is yet room for improvement, it is certain that good progress in the right direction has been made; nor is there anything to discourage the hope that they will grow up to be men and women of upright character. If all in the tribe were as good as those in the school, nobody would doubt that the next generation would be in every respect a better people. To bring them all in is now the object of my main endeavor.

When it was ascertained that Indian hostilities east of the mountains had drawn off all military defenses from the sound-country, there was fear in some minds of trouble among the tribes living upon these waters. I am happy, however, to report that no insubordination has appeared among those of this agency, and that I have no apprehension of any. While, however, this is the case in this immediate agency, wisdom would dictate precaution against any possible outbreak here or elsewhere, and I have noticed with pleasure the announcement in the dispatches of the ordering of a man-of-war to cruise in Puget Sound. The presence of such an instrumentality will inspire universal confidence and banish all danger.

In previous reports and correspondence I have urged the importance of improving the tide-lands of the reservation. As my work progresses, the necessity of this will become more and more imperative. When the boys and girls go out from the school to settle in homes of their own, they must have farms on which they can subsist. The timber-land, covered as it is with heavy growth of evergreen timber, is not worth clearing. Indians will never undertake to clear it. The best lands we have in the Territory for cultivation are tide-lands, and of these there are enough on the reservation, properly improved, to subsist the whole tribe.

By reference to statistics of farming, given in answer to the specific inquiries herewith returned, it will be perceived that this is not an agricultural reservation. The reservation-farm, which is situated upon the sea-coast south of Cape Flattery, contains in its inclosure about 100 acres, with a comfortable farm-house, barn, and outhouses. But the land is sandy and sterile, and the productions limited. There is a cleared field, at Neah Bay, of probably 20 acres. In this is the reservation-garden, cultivated chiefly by the school, and a small meadow. By means of fertilization this field is made to produce grass and vegetables for the use of the agency. But, naturally, this field is also sterile, and if we had good arable land elsewhere it would not pay to till it.

The prairie-lands of the reservation, forming the valley of the Waatch Creek and of the Suez River, are subject to overflow by the tide. On these there is produced annually thousands of tons of the finest natural grass, which, but for tide-water, could be made into hay, and yield a profitable income. The land, if diked, could be made to produce barley, oats, potatoes, and all the esculent roots in great abundance, and furnish the best inducement to the Indians to turn their attention to farming. As it is, they have no temptation to cultivate land. The upland of the reservation is either barren sea-beach, or else it is timber-land, covered with spruce and hemlock, to clear which would cost hundreds of dollars per acre—an undertaking quite out of the question with Indians. The expense of diking the tide-lands would not exceed three dollars per acre, if done according to the plan recommended by the engineer who surveyed the valley and projected the improvement in May, 1875, whose report, with the accompanying map, are now on file in the Commissioner's office.

That projected dike, of less than half a mile, with a tide-gate in the river, would reclaim a thousand acres of the finest agricultural land in the country, which would be ready for the plow as soon as diked. Then there would remain in the Suez Valley, a little farther south, enough of pasture-land for all the stock on the reservation. This improvement involves not only the question of self-support, it involves the paramount question of civilization. When the children of the tribe, now in course of their education, shall go out from school, shall they be provided with a chance to live as civilized people live, or shall they be forced for subsistence back to the occupation and homes of their fathers? This is the important question, and I cannot close this report without repeating the recommendation, several times made heretofore, that means be appropriated to reclaim these lands.

It was my intention to have visited the Quillehutes, recently transferred to my jurisdiction, before submitting this report. But finding it impossible to do this without delaying my

report beyond the time prescribed, I have concluded to defer my visit and make my observations there the subject of a special report after my return. The leading facts concerning them, as collected at second-hand, will be found below. I do not expect they can be induced to come to the reservation to reside permanently. They are much attached to their ancient home. They have good fishing-ground and plenty of game, and the probability is that it will be best not to disturb them at present. Of this, however, I can speak more definitely after visiting them in person.

From the foregoing statements, and from the facts and figures given in the accompanying list of inquiries, it will be seen that the educational work of the agency is of more consequence than all else beside. It cannot fail to be observed, furthermore, that it is no sinecure to the agent and his family; that assuming the care and guardianship of fifty Indian children, with a prospect of greatly exceeding that number soon, places the laboring oar heavily in their hands, and entitles them to the sympathy, encouragement, and co-operation of the department. This, I am happy to believe, we have received in the past to the extent of the Commissioner's means and ability. Appropriations have been forwarded promptly, and in amounts as liberal as the law of Congress rendered it possible. Marked kindness has been shown the agent in the settlement of his accounts, and in the bearing of financial burdens created by outside parties maliciously for acts performed in obedience to official direction. For this, and for the uniformly kind and respectful spirit of all official correspondence, I can do no less than record my most grateful and heartfelt acknowledgments.

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of August, A. D. 1877.

C. A. HUNTINGTON,
United States Indian Agent.

The COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.
