

No. 105.

Office United States Indian Agent,  
*Nevada, September 30, 1871.*

Sir: In accordance with the regulations of the Indian Bureau, I have the honor to respectfully submit my first annual report of the affairs of this agency for the year ending September 30, 1871.

On the 10th of April last, at Ionia, Michigan, I received commission and appointment from the President, confirmed by the Senate of the United States, to be agent for the Indians in the State of Nevada. (Walker River reservation.)

Without unnecessary delay I proceeded to Carson City, Nevada, where for some time I was delayed, waiting transportation to the reservation, seventy-five miles away, but on the 6th day of May I arrived upon the field, which, together with other matters connected with my first survey of the reservation, were reported in letter under date of May 8th.

I found the Pah Ute Indians occupying the reservation, and much of the country adjacent, as they are the most extensive tribe in Nevada in numbers, and superior in intelligence and culture.

At the time of my arrival there were unusual numbers present, sitting the time announced for the great fandango or dance which, I subsequently learned, was called to gratify the desires of some unknown prophet, who, in some way, had succeeded in advertising the farce that God was coming in the mountains beyond with a large supply for all their wants, of what Indians most desire, *game*, and withal transform the sterility of Nevada to the fertility and beauty of Eden. (All would admit a glorious transformation, but over which in prospect alone they would dance.)

Not less than one thousand have occupied their lodgings upon the reservation, or if absent at all, but little time during my sojourn among them, and yet I have not heard of the slightest difficulty among them that threatened to be of a serious nature. I found them at first what I have found them to be since—a very docile and friendly tribe. They are poor, and but little has ever been done to make them otherwise. Their chief subsistence consists of fish, game, grass-seeds, and pine-nuts, the latter growing upon the scraggy pines upon the neighboring mountains. The present year is lamentably unfavorable for their desires, as the unparalleled drought in this country has entirely cut off the supply of bunch-grass, and consequently no seed to be gathered; also the supply of pine-nuts has shared the same fate. Thus the Indians have had to depend almost wholly upon their fish and game, though the increased demand has greatly reduced the game, until that supply is now quite limited.

A small number have been rationed from Government supplies, while they

have worked to clear off sage-brush and cultivate a portion of land, under the superintendence of the faithful farmer of the reservation, Franklin Campbell, esq., and too much cannot be said to the credit of this gentleman for his long-continued efforts for this people.

The appropriation for Nevada has been too meager to accomplish what ought ere this to have been accomplished with so good a man at this post. ~Sot a tithe of the demand; the great misfortune is the more apparent in the necessity of the multitude, who are deprived of the opportunity of entering upon the work, and thus becoming self-supporting.

From what has been done upon the Walker River reservation by the Pah-Ute Indians, under this judicious supervision, the past season, I am constrained to say that greater good would have resulted had the necessary supplies been furnished.

I have lamented my want of ability to provide what was required when I have seen eager, anxious ones around me desiring to make a farm of their own, and thereby procure a permanent livelihood.

Educational interests have had their place in my mind, but propriety and better judgment have always whispered bread first, then books; and yet their oft-expressed desire for schools, where their children might learn to read and write, demands a passing notice, and nothing, in my humble opinion, would bring an earlier and surer reward to the philanthropic than the establishment of labor boarding-schools upon this reservation.

I should be untrue to the impulses of my heart were I to pass unnoticed the virtue of this tribe. Their manifest regard for their females is remarkable, indeed, and quite in contrast to some Indian tribes who claim even more of civilization. I have been told repeatedly that, of the more than five thousand Pah-Ute Indians, there is not a mixed-blood among them, and I have seen nothing to contradict it. There may be cases of infamy and prostitution, but I believe they are the exception. They are as superstitiously benighted as the pagan of India so far as true religion is concerned, but are not blind to their sense of honor, and one has only to visit their lodges to witness their marked desire to be clad: and primitive inventions are considered far more preferable than nakedness—a virtue which I have of late sought to encourage by the purchase and issue of as large a supply of clothing as appropriations would justify.

Before I close my report for the Walker River reservation, I would most respectfully recommend that the honorable the Congress of the United States and the Department of the Interior would make such appropriations at an early day as is commensurate with the wants of this heretofore neglected people.

This reservation needs not only a large advance in supplies, but buildings

and other improvements are greatly demanded, and the want of which only extends indefinitely the care of these wards, while, otherwise, they might be put upon a self supporting basis at an early day. The share that they now receive from the appropriation of \$15,000 per year, with an addition of 810,000 the coming year, would be none too much to meet the very pressing demands, and the want of enough to make permanent work is useless expenditure, only as it may be a benefit to the few that are favored.

WADSWORTH OFFICE AND PYRAMID LAKE RESERVATION.

On the 17th day of August Rev. George Balcom, special Indian agent for Pyramid Lake reservation, turned over to me, and received my receipt for the same, schedule of all personal property and effects belonging to the Indian service in connection with the Pyramid Lake reservation, and having resigned, took his exit from the Stat\* of Nevada, to enjoy a better state of civilization and remunerative employment. Mr. Balcom had occupied rooms for office at Wadsworth, and turned over invoice of public property at these rooms to me also.

The 7th day of August last, while at the Walker River reservation, I was in receipt of letters from the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, under date of July 24, instructing me to proceed without delay to inquire after and provide for the wants of the Indians on Pyramid Lake reservation, letters having been received at the Department reporting starvation and intense suffering among the Indians there. Upon receipt of this communication I proceeded at once to carry out said instructions, taking with me Mr. George Oneep, official interpreter for the Pah-Utes. On my arrival at Wadsworth I presented communications from the Department to Special Agent Balcom, who pronounced the reports a fabrication. However, taking him with us, we proceeded to visit the Pyramid Lake reservation. The full report of visit and doings were given in my letters to the Department under date of August 24, and I need not recapitulate, but only say that the returns for all the labor, talent and money expended there showed an almost abandoned reservation, without crops or intelligence, remunerating even in the most imperfect degree for the means expended. The few Indians that remained through the summer were so sickly as to require quite a large expenditure for physicians and medicines to do them justice; no cases of starvation, however, had occurred. From the time of the departure of late Special Agent Balcom I was virtually in charge of the Pyramid Lake as well as of the Walker River reservation, but on the 21st day of September instructions from the Department were received, under date of 12th instant, instructing me to assume full charge, with permission to establish office at Wadsworth, discontinuing the special agency entirely.

Much might be said about the Pyramid Lake reservation which the

Department should know, but I can only hope in this annual report to touch points and leave them. £

First. This reservation provides one of the finest fisheries in the country, and for months in the year a full support to all the Indians that choose to engage in fishing, there being a market so near that there is no difficulty in selling.

Second. There is a very fine range for stock, and quite a herd may be provided with feed the whole year, and nothing can be engaged in that produces a surer reward than stock.

Third. There is a good supply of timber, (cottonwood.) which is not only profitable to the supply of fuel for the Indians, but protection to herds.

Fourth. The discovery of a certain marble ledge by F. H. Cowler, esq., upon the reservation, may or may not be a source of revenue to the Indians. Time and money will develop; at present, as matters in connection were conducted and left by the late special agent, it proves quite a revenue of care to me.

My opinion regarding the agricultural interests of this reservation is that it will never avail anything of permanence unless at an expense unjustifiable. The land is very difficult to irrigate, lying high above low-water mark, full of sink-holes, and at a distance from the fall of water as to require a very long ditch to reach it. Again the dam that was constructed across the Truckee River, which runs through the reservation, to raise the water for irrigating purposes, is a source of more expenditure of money and labor than will ever return to the reservation, besides being a source of difficulty generally. It was built upon a sand and gravel bed, with a broad sand-hat on one side and a sand-hill on the other, and no rise of water of any considerable amount but will break the construction or force a new channel at the side or end, and thus I am of the conviction that the hope of gaining much agriculture upon this reservation is exhausted, the results of the past season a criterion.

I therefore recommend that any surplus means that can be spared from the appropriation, over and above the actual need of providing for the sick and destitute, and such clothing as is needed for the Indians, be expended in stock and placed upon the reservation, either issued directly to the Indians, or through some proper person held in trust for increase for them. I am satisfied that pride would be taken as well as great interest by the Indians to increase their numbers, and thus provide against any future want. I am satisfied that if a special appropriation of \$5,000 were made for this specific object it would accomplish more than double the amount in the manner of the past.

The reservation is notoriously sickly for some months in the summer, and

the time when farming is most needed the reservation is most abandoned, the Indians going to the mountains and returning in the fall for fishing. The Pah-Utes are the same in spirit and action upon each reservation, and what has been written of the one applies as well to the other. In conclusion, I would again advise relative to the necessity of increased appropriations. With the present prices of supplies, together with the rates of exchange, (as for everything we must pay in United States coin upon this coast,) the sum of \$15,000 for the State of Nevada is meager indeed to carry on the Indian service, and but little of permanent improvement can be expected to the masses of the Indians; but a just policy, including needful appropriations, will rapidly advance them toward self-supporting civilization.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
C. A. BATEMAN, *United States Indian Agent, Nevada.*  
Hon. H. K. Clum,  
*Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*