

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1865.

AUGUSTA:

STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1865.

REPORTS

OF THE

INDIAN AGENT

AND

SUPERINTENDENT ON FARMING

OF THE

PENOBSCOT TRIBE OF INDIANS.

1864.

AUGUSTA:
STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.
1865.

AGENT'S REPORT.

To the Honorable Governor and Council of Maine:

I respectfully submit the following Report in regard to the Penobscot Tribe of Indians, for the nine months ending December 1, 1864.

The amount of expenditures during that time, as will more fully appear by the accompanying account, are as follows :

For paid Governor Joseph Attian, per resolve,	\$25 00
Lieut. Governor John Neptune, per resolve,	25 00
annual spring dividend,	756 53
repairs on Indian chapel, per resolve,	100 00
S. S. Committee of Oldtown and Lincoln, per resolve,	200 00
for agricultural purposes, per resolve,	1000 00
bounty on crops, per resolve,	400 00
for support of poor, aged, infirm and sick,	953 25
for medicines and medical services,	88 59
for funeral expenses,	196 17
for taking census, surveying and other incidentals,	159 03
salary for nine months,	225 00
for annuity or fall dividend,	2429 65
	\$6558 22

RECEIPTS.

By warrant of March, 1864,	\$500 00
" June 23d, 1864,	2000 00
" October 13th, 1864,	600 00
" December, 1864,	827 82
By amount received for oxen sold,	125 00
" " grass "	17 00
" " corn, flour, pork and molasses,	58 75
	\$4128 57
Remaining from spring dividend,	\$4128 57

Leaving an excess of expenditures above receipts of twenty-four hundred twenty-nine 65-100 dollars, (\$2,429.65) which is the amount paid by me to furnish the articles required by the treaty made by Massachusetts with this tribe, and assumed by the State of Maine. The Legislature of last winter having omitted to make the necessary appropriation for this purpose, I have under your advice complied with the stipulations of that treaty, believing the Legislature would rectify the omission as soon as it became known.

The census of the tribe, taken by the S. S. Committee of Oldtown, and returned to me, shows the number of males to be 266; females, 234. Total, 500.

The schools on Oldtown and Mattanawcook Islands were taught by female teachers, were well attended, and their progress satisfactory. For particulars, I refer to the reports of the S. S. Committees of Oldtown and Lincoln. The building used for a schoolhouse on Oldtown Island was built by the State many years ago for a storehouse, and has become so decayed as to be unsafe. The expense of suitably repairing this building would be about the same as of building a new one, better adapted for this purpose. Some action in this respect is very much needed.

The agricultural department has been under the charge of Rev. Charles Blanchard, appointed for that purpose, to whose report I refer for the proceedings in that branch. I would suggest that no appropriation was made to pay his salary.

The amount of seed distributed last spring, on account of the advance in price was not so large as usual, yet I think under the judicious method of planting and cultivation adopted the tribe have derived more profit from their lands than they have for several years past. Mr. Blanchard did not receive his appointment till late in the season, and the full advantage of the present arrangement cannot be reasonably expected, yet by his good judgment and skilful management their farming interests have been greatly benefited.

Much injury is done to the crops by cattle crossing the river at low water to the several islands. These cattle are allowed to run at large in the woods during the summer, and frequently stray a great distance from their homes, and it is almost impossible for the Indians to find out the owners or keepers of the cattle doing damage, and the several towns, even where there are legal pound-keepers, are very unwilling to impound these cattle. I would

respectfully recommend that some protection be extended to the Indians in this behalf.

The employments of the members of the tribe are about the same as heretofore. The women principally are engaged in making baskets, which they sell generally for a scanty compensation, though at highly remunerative prices at the fashionable watering places. The men are engaged in farming, fishing, hunting, and assisting their wives in basket-making. The tribe also furnishes some of our best river drivers and woodsmen. The drivers last spring realized more from their labors than usual.

The physical condition of the tribe is as good as can be expected. They are not very strict observers of hygienic laws, and consequently have to pay the penalty by sickness in its various forms. Probably their change in mode of living, aided by a general neglect of the laws of health, has introduced many diseases. Consumption, for instance, formerly unknown to them, is now quite prevalent.

Their moral condition is on the whole good. A large majority of the tribe are virtuous, industrious and temperate. There are some, however, who are indolent and improvident, and at times exhibit some of the vices which indolence is sure to beget. But whenever it becomes known that an Indian has committed a wrong, the better class feel it quite sensitively, considering it a disgrace upon their tribe, and exert great influence towards restitution, and in this manner prevent the commission of crime to any great extent. Intemperance is their greatest bane. It would seem that the law is strict enough to prevent sales of intoxicating liquors to Indians, yet the difficulty is in obtaining the evidence necessary for a conviction. The Indian will rarely ever disclose the place of his purchase, and whenever he does, cross-examination, from his limited knowledge of our language, renders his testimony of little value. If the Legislature could by any means remedy this difficulty, it would be of great advantage to this tribe.

The election of their Representatives to Legislature is a source of great loss to them in money and time, frequently resulting on the part of some in riotous conduct. The tribe is about equally divided into two parties, styled "Old Party" and "New Party," and party spirit runs high. I think this loss of time and money, and the attending ill feeling and strife, might be avoided by allowing each party a delegate in our Legislature. I do not make this

as a recommendation, but suggest the fact, that some method may be adopted to effect the desired result.

Quite a large portion of the lands of this tribe are in a wild or unproductive state, and at present of no particular value to them ; while the process of reducing them to a state of cultivation would be too long for their patience, and the necessary outlay exceed their ability. I would suggest that these lands might be reclaimed and rendered valuable to them and the state, by allowing the Indians, or some one for them, in behalf of the State, to lease these lands for a terms of years, requiring the lessees, in addition to the rent, to make certain specified improvements year by year.

The treaties and regulations between the State and this tribe require many articles to be furnished in kind, and necessary support to widows, the aged and infirm, and also certain hired labor in plowing, &c. Taking this fact in connection with the excessive advance in cost of all kinds of goods and labor, will necessitate larger appropriations than in former years to carry out the agreements assumed by the State, and to afford the tribe as good satisfaction as heretofore.

I would add, in behalf of the tribe, that in general they are well pleased with the generous conduct of the State towards them ; that though weak and almost extinguished, they are ready and desirous of manifesting their appreciation of this kindness, not merely by words, but by deeds. While seeing the great calamity which is now distracting our common country, many of the tribe nobly and earnestly entreated to be permitted to aid in fighting the battles for the Union ; but by the regulations of our government, this to them much-desired privilege was denied. Within a short time, however, these regulations have been changed ; and since that change, although not subject to any draft, more than one-fifth of their voting population have gladly embraced the opportunity of lending their aid to the perpetuation of that government which they feel has ever been their true friend.

GEORGE F. DILLINGHAM,

Agent Penobscot Indians.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor and his Council, Maine :

Having attended to the duties assigned me in relation to the Penobscot Indians, I would respectfully submit the following

REPORT.

Four hundred dollars being appropriated to do the plowing for such Indians as wished to do something at farming, and to be divided equitably among them, I found it necessary first to visit all the Islands, and ascertain the number of farms—which was eighty—giving to each farmer the amount of five dollars. But afterwards, others came forward claiming a share, which increased the number to one hundred, who, by the advice, of the Hon. Mr. Ruggles, were all supplied.

The amount for plowing last spring, and what has been done this fall, together with seed furnished to plant, is one thousand dollars ; but this sum, at the present prices of labor, is insufficient to meet their demand. I proposed to them that each one should hold the plow on his own land, and in so doing he could have about one-third more plowed ; but they objected, on the ground that they had formerly had it done for them, and thought it should be so now. Consequently, I had to do the best I could with the means at my disposal.

I did what I could in attending to their planting and hoeing ; but as they were scattered on so many Islands, extending up the river forty miles, made it impossible to give much attention to them individually. When the grass was about fit to cut, I examined all their fields in order to ascertain the amount of hay, and give them a correct idea of its value, for many of them had been induced to sell for much less than the real value of the grass. In this service they may be greatly assisted.

About that time many of the Indians left on their various excursions. Some to the salt water, and others to the various towns

and cities to sell baskets and other trinkets ; but it was not long before I found it necessary to commence an examination of their grain crop, for many of them sell their oats to be cut for fodder, so the amount there might be of thrashed oats can only be estimated while they are standing.

In September I examined and estimated the potatoe crop. In years past their own estimates have been generally received, and I find that they are anxious to make the estimate as high as possible, and making the amount a great deal above what there really was ; but in order to be as nearly correct as possible, I counted the rows and the hills in a row, and then by digging a few hills I could decide very correctly the amount of each piece.

Their farming has formerly been done without system, and, in many instances, to great disadvantage. Sometimes the plowing was let out by the acre, and often to irresponsible persons. The consequence was, the work was poorly done, and frequently much out of season, consequently the crops amounted to but little. A large portion of the ground cultivated was sown with oats on land newly broken up, with harrowing as deficient as the plowing, and frequently out of season ; the result was the crop was hardly worth cutting, and the catch of grass in many instances so poor that the fields would become almost barren.

In many instances they have selected land for cultivation naturally barren, while other pieces of first rate land are left, producing nothing but bushes. In this they need the advice of a judicious assistant, their judgment in many such respects being exceedingly deficient.

Inasmuch as they have a large amount of land of the very best quality, I have proposed to them to make new clearings and leave many of their old fields for pasturage, but to this many object that the cattle owned by persons living on the shores destroy their crops to such an extent that they have no courage to make any further outlay.

That they are wronged by their white neighbors in this respect is undeniable, for after rendering them all the assistance in my power, I should think the cattle owned by persons living on the shores this present season have injured them more than a hundred dollars. Their land on the islands is much of it so low that the freshets overflow them, and no fence could be made to stand, and when the water in the river is low, they have neither defence nor

protection; and what seems still worse is, when they go to the owners of trespassing cattle, they receive nothing but abuse in many instances—in consequence of which some have abandoned their lands, and many have removed to other places. If each of the adjoining towns had a good pound for cattle and officers to take and keep such as trespass, they could break up such intruding, but in this the towns of this vicinity are very deficient. If a law could be passed authorizing the Indians to sue and attach the cattle of owner unknown, and the officer retaining such cattle until the real owner could be legally notified and have full opportunity to redeem them, and if the owner should then neglect to pay cost and damage after a specified time, let the cattle be sold to pay damage and cost, the evil would be soon removed; but without some such law their land and farming are of but little importance.

Another hindrance in the way of successful farming is found in a want of manure, for but few of them keep any cattle. Last spring I proposed to them to obtain and use Coe's Superphosphate of Lime mixed with Plaster of Paris, equal parts. The result was, it added to the crop about fifty per cent. Others used the plaster alone, which did well, but not equal to the mixture. Several others now intend to use the same mixture next year. Much of their land is well adapted to the use of plaster or of the mixture. If in this they could be assisted by a small appropriation, it might put them in a way to make such improvements as to bring them more into farming by making farming more profitable.

A great portion their land is lying waste, the wood and timber having been removed, and they have so little confidence in securing their crops against neighboring cattle, they feel unwilling to expend anything more upon new clearings, but if some way could be provided for their security, new openings can be made.

Or if provision was made by law for them, under the direction of the Agent, to lease such lands for a term of years, sufficient to pay the expense of clearing, many would take land and put it in a condition to eventually be profitable to the owners. And if provisions should be made for them to lease their old fields for a term of years, they might be so reclaimed as to again be productive. But when they can be convinced that their rights will be suitably protected, much of such improvements will be done by themselves.

Some of their land is well adapted to fruit growing, and last spring I recommended to them to obtain and set apple trees, which

some of them did, and they appear to be doing well. This branch of husbandry might be of great service to them, as well as affording high satisfaction. All that is wanted is for some one to assist them in selecting the trees and the soil adapted, so that after a few have succeeded, most of them will follow the example.

The result of the present year's operations is as follows :

They have raised 1095 cabbages, 71 bushels of beets, 37 bushels of carrots, $93\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of turnips, $56\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of corn, 5569 bushels of potatoes, 181 bushels of beans, $50\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of peas, $582\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of oats, 166 bushels of barley, 160 bushels of wheat, 2 bushels of onions, 353 tons of hay—the value of which, at present prices, will amount to over \$9000 : and if they can be induced to go into farming as they should, as their land is of the first quality there may be more than three times that amount annually produced.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHARLES BLANCHARD,
Superintendent on Indian Farming.