

1860

Reports of the Indian Agents of the State of Maine

James A. Purinton
State of Maine

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INDIAN AGENTS

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1860.

AUGUSTA:

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1860

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REPORT.

*To the Governor and Council
of the State of Maine:*

The undersigned, Agent of the Penobscot Indians, herewith respectfully submits his report of the transactions of his Agency for the year ending Dec. 15th, 1860.

I respectfully refer to my accounts on file for particulars relating to the financial affairs of this tribe for the year past.

A synopsis of the accounts are as follows :

The receipts of this agency up to this time have been :

By warrant of April 2d,	- - - - -	\$2100 00
Warrant of October 16th,	- - - - -	2300 00
Amount received for potatoes,	- - - - -	7 20
" " " pasturage,	- - - - -	14 80
" " " grass sold,	- - - - -	6 00
		<hr/>
		\$4428 00

The disbursements during the same time are as follows :

Outstanding bills against Agency of 1859,	- - - - -	\$205 94
Paid John Neptune, as per resolve, 1860,	- - - - -	25 00
Plowing and harrowing,	- - - - -	671 54
Seed distributed,	- - - - -	534 82
Annual spring dividend,	- - - - -	464 48
Clothing for the Poor, Aged, Infirm and Children,	- - - - -	177 65
Support of Poor, Medicine &c.,	- - - - -	950 81
Medical services,	- - - - -	79 50
Funeral expenses,	- - - - -	54 44
Incidental expenses,	- - - - -	106 06
Full dividend,	- - - - -	1249 02
D. C. Merrick, bill for services on Public Farm to April 27, 1860,	- - - - -	68 00

John Dougherty, bill for services on Public Farm, to Dec. 14, 1860,	- - - - -	196 00
Tools and supplies for Public Farm,	- - - - -	52 13
Salary of Agent, 10½ months,	- - - - -	384 38
Bounties on crops,	- - - - -	697 05
		<hr/>
		\$5916 82

The appropriations made by the Legislature of 1860, were as follows:

Interest on fund,	- - - - -	2970 00
Annuities,	- - - - -	1600 00
John Neptune,	- - - - -	25 00
Agricultural purposes	- - - - -	650 00
		<hr/>
Total,	- - - - -	\$5245 00

It will be perceived that the expenditures exceed the appropriations by the sum of \$675 82. But deducting the salary of the Agent and Superintendent, which comes directly from the State, the expenditures, including the bounties paid but which do not become due until January next, amount to the sum of \$5236 44.

In connection with this branch of my report I would suggest for your consideration, whether or not the Legislative appropriations have hitherto been made in conformity with the requirements of the Treaty of 1820, and in strict justice to the tribe. The treaty of Mass., of 1818, ratified by the State of Maine in 1820,

(See Acts and Resolves of Maine, 1843.)—"stipulate that the tribe shall be provided with a discrete man of good moral character and industrious habits, to instruct them in the art of husbandry, and assist in fencing and tilling their grounds, raising such articles of production as their lands are suited for, and as will be most beneficial for them."

The State by that treaty, is as fully charged for the expenses of the Superintendent, as with the annuities, and is so recognized by the Legislative acts, from the year 1835 to the present time. But so far as I can learn, no special appropriations have ever been made to meet this treaty liability. But, on the contrary, it has hitherto been a charge on the fund raised by the sale of the four townships, made long after. In spite of the express covenant of the State with the Indians, when she received the proceeds of that sale; that it "should be deposited in the State Treasury, and the interest should annually be paid, under the direction of the Gov-

ernor and Council of the State, through the Indian Agent, for the benefit of said tribe, provided it should in their opinion be required for the comfortable support of said tribe."

See Acts and Resolves of 1843, as above reported.

The contract then goes on to stipulate that if the interest should not be wanted for said purpose it should be added to the principal and form an accumulated fund, and forever remain in the treasury as such.

The contract therefore manifestly limits the use of the interest to comfortable support of the tribe.

It is therefore respectfully suggested that the service of the Superintendent should hereafter be a special item of appropriation.

As the resolve of 1860 calls for a report of the present condition of the Indians connected with the agency, it may be convenient to arrange my statements in regard to them under different heads.

POPULATION OF THE TRIBE.

According to the census returned to me, and which accompanies my report, and to which I respectfully refer, it appears the tribe numbers 525.

All payments made to the members of the tribe, except bounties, have been per capita. According to the list, from the census it appears that the number of the tribe has not materially changed for the last forty years; they have increased rather than diminished; this may be accounted for in part, by their intermarriage with other tribes and the French.

EDUCATION.

By a resolve of March, 1860, the sum of \$350 was appropriated for maintaining schools among the tribe. \$250 of this was to be expended under the direction of the Superintending School Committee of Old Town, and the balance by the School Committee of the town of Lincoln. The resolve provides for a return of those Committees on this behalf, to be made to the Secretary of State.

I have, therefore no means at hand to give an accurate statement of the schools. I am able to speak of the school at Old Town somewhat in detail, it being under my more immediate observation.

The school commenced on Old Town Island, under the care of a female instructor, May 14th, and closed October 12th; during this

time the school was interrupted about two weeks, by a case of varioloid among the tribe, on the Island.

Whole number of scholars,	- - - - -	54
Average number,	- - - - -	24 $\frac{1}{2}$

Whole time of instruction, about 20 weeks.

The ages of scholars vary from five to twenty-four years.— Eight being above twenty years. The average attendance in the county is about sixty-seven per cent, showing that this school falls but little short in attendance of the schools for white children.

The studies of the school have been confined to reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic and geography. The school books being of the kind in general use. The progress of the school so far as I am informed, and from observation, has been encouraging, and the mode of instruction quite satisfactory to the Indians.

The advance made by the scholars indicates a capacity for learning and comprehending the useful branches of education.

The school at Lincoln, from the best information I have, will compare favorably with the school at Old Town. On the whole I have no hesitation in saying that the money has been judiciously expended, and the result of the school fully answers all reasonable expectations, and justifies legislative appropriations; let the system adopted be continued, and it will be a powerful means of improving the language, elevating the character and improving the condition of this people.

AGRICULTURE.

About two-thirds of the tribe reside on Old Town Island, and immediate vicinity, the rest are scattered on the islands above, a distance of thirty-five miles. About one hundred are engaged more or less in working on the land. They raise corn, wheat, oats, barley, buck-wheat, potatoes, beans, peas and the common vegetables.

A large portion of the grass is sold while standing, the proceeds of which helps support them; their stock of cattle is small. Their crops, the past season, were good, and the attention to agriculture better than in former years. They have manifested quite a spirit of emulation in this branch of labor.

In former years, as the census will show, the members of the tribe in large numbers, have scattered away in the spring before

planting, and return late in the fall, only in time to draw their dividends or dispose of the same. The lands were abandoned or left to be cultivated by those remaining at home. As might be supposed, those who wandered off gained but a scanty subsistence, and in many instances have required aid, from the different localities in which they were found, and in the end causing an expense on their account, if allowed, wholly disproportioned to their individual claims on the common fund.

To avoid this, and believing it to be for the interest of the tribe generally, I have encouraged locality and a love of home. When I came into this agency, and observed the labors of the Indians on the land, it was quite apparent they had been accustomed to rely, in the majority of cases, upon those who were employed to plow and harrow their lands, to do their sowing and planting also, making but little exertion to help themselves.

In such cases, which have come to my knowledge, I have induced them to take part in the work, and thus gain the information requisite for the cultivation of their own lands with the assistance of the teachings furnished by the State.

I am satisfied that every attempt practicable should be made to induce them to till the soil and labor at home; this cannot be done at once, but will require time, and should be persevered in, and receive due legislative encouragement; but to a people naturally indolent and impatient of labor, particular inducements to industry should be held out; aware of this the State has wisely held out a system of bounties, which, if properly carried out, will do more than anything else, in the present condition of the Indians, to make them an industrious and thrifty people. The difference between the bounty policy and mere donation is quite apparent. The former is an incentive to industry, the latter fosters idleness. In this department I have endeavored to conform as near as possible to the letter and meaning of the bounty law; for my particular doings therein I refer to my account herewith submitted.

The Act of 1835 provides that a "suitable tract of land be allotted for a farm on which to keep the old Indians, invalids and orphan children who are unable to support themselves." In obedience to this act the Public Farm was established on Orson Island. As some doubts have been expressed as to the utility of this farm, I have endeavored to give the matter all the attention that my other engagements would admit. When I entered upon the duties of

my agency I found the buildings in a very dilapidated state, and the soil very much exhausted. The man I found in charge of the farm, having made engagements elsewhere, left in the April following, when I secured the services of a competent person, who took charge of the farm, and has remained on it since. I found on the farm one yoke of oxen, some farming tools, 24 bushels potatoes,—(which being of an inferior quality I sold and purchased better for seed),—ten tons of hay, and six bushels buck-wheat. Besides the usual spring work on the farm, I caused eight acres to be sowed with oats and seeded down to grass; the Superintendent, in addition to the work on the farm, was employed eight days assisting and instructing the Indians on their several lots in the spring, and this fall has worked himself and oxen twelve days on the different lots in plowing and preparing the ground for another year. The crop on the farm for the past year amounts to about twelve tons hay, one hundred bushels potatoes, eight bushels carrots, and one hundred seventy-five bushels oats, worth in all about three hundred dollars. A good preparation has been made for the next year. Eight acres as above mentioned have been prepared for grass, and three acres have been cleared and ready for a crop. The farm will probably cut twenty-five tons of hay another year. In my opinion, this farm with a few years management of good husbandry, cannot fail of being as productive as farms usually are in this vicinity, but even if it fail to meet full expectations in this particular, still, in as much as the services of the man and oxen are needed in the winter season in hauling wood for the poor, which under other circumstances would be a direct charge on the Indian fund, it seems to me it should not be abandoned. I therefore respectfully suggest that a moderate sum be appropriated for the repairs of the buildings.

EMPLOYMENT AND MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE.

There are about one hundred and fifty men of this tribe capable of labor; I am not able to state the exact number; of these about one hundred engage in farming, more or less; besides farming, a portion of the men are engaged in winter season in hunting, and some of the young men, during the spring months are employed on the river driving lumber. The women are employed in making baskets, snow-shoes and moccasins.

The men also make canoes. These employments, together with their fund, annuities, bounties, a small stock of cattle and some rents of small amount, compose their means of subsistence.

GENERAL CONDITION.

During the year there has been considerable sickness among the tribe, but not particularly fatal. There has been but one case of small-pox. As has been before stated, two-thirds of the tribe reside on Old Town Island, where they have a chapel, council-hall, a school-house in poor repair, forty-three framed dwelling-houses, and three barns, also twenty-nine houses and fifteen barns scattered on the islands above. Their stock consists of eighteen swine, twenty-five head neat cattle, and three horses. As is well known the tribe has a nominal government of their own, and retain certain ancient customs and usages. How far these control or effect their conduct I am unable to say, but I have found them thus far quiet and peaceable in their habits, and obedient to our laws. Cases of intoxication have frequently occurred, but to no greater extent than heretofore. It is difficult to obtain evidence of the violation of the law against the sale of intoxicating drink to the Indians, and if obtained the penalty is inadequate to the offence, and insufficient to restrain the sale. I therefore suggest additional legislation on this subject. In their domestic relations the Indians of this tribe show favorably; they are chaste in their habits, and generally kind in their intercourse with each other. The Indians are naturally jealous, and this jealousy is sometimes inflamed by the selfish motives and insinuations of the whites, to such a degree that the refusal of the agent to comply with all their demands, however unreasonable, is attributed to some personal motive on his part, and from this cause he is often much embarrassed in the discharge of his duties.

In concluding my remarks on the condition of this tribe, permit me to say that their present condition exhibits many circumstances that promise well for the future, and encourage the hope that by the means of a wholesome system of labor and education, without which it is vain to expect any advance in their civilization, and by the aid of an enlightened policy on the part of the State, they will progress in virtue and knowledge, and in the arts common among a cultivated people; but if, on the other hand, after all that has been done for them, that justice and humanity

demand, they shall share the fate that has so often overtaken the Indian, in his conflict with civilized life, and disappear one by one until all are gone from among us, the State, their self-constituted guardian, will stand vindicated before the world, in having discharged towards them its whole duty.

Before closing this report I respectfully suggest that the following appropriations be made for the year next ensuing viz :

Balance,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$675 02
Interest on Indian Fund,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3000 00
Annuities,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1600 00
For Superintendent,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	325 00
For repairs on building for farm,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100 00
Agricultural purposes,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	650 00
Bounties on crops,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	700 00
									\$7050 02

JAMES A. PURINTON, *Indian Agent.*

OLD TOWN, Dec. 15th, 1860.