

1892

Report of the Agents of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians

Not Known

Indian Agent, State of Maine

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REPORT OF AGENT

OF THE

PENOBSCOT TRIBE OF INDIANS,

FOR THE YEAR

1892.

AUGUSTA:

BURLEIGH & FLYNT, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1893.

REPORT.

His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable Council:

Having assumed the duties of the office of agent of the Penobscot Tribe in April last, my present report is made at the close of eight instead of twelve months of the usual fiscal year; and my predecessor having settled his accounts at the end of his official term, the appropriation and expenditures herein scheduled are complete only for the balance of that year, viz., from April 1, to December 1, 1892.

APPROPRIATIONS.—(Resolves of 1891.)

Indian Trust Fund balance, (\$4,429.70 less \$2,568.72).....	\$1,860 98
For farming.....	700 00
superintending farming..	150 00
schools, (\$600.00 less \$100.00).....	500 00
salary of Governor of Tribe.....	50 00
Lieut.-Gov. “	40 00
Priest “	100 00
Agent “ (2-3 year).....	133 33
fall dividends (annuity).....	1,700 00
bounty on crops.....	300 00
	\$5,534 31

EXPENDITURES.

For supplies to poor, sick and infirm, \$1,399 69	69
burial expenses.....	62 52
medicine and medical attendance,	178 50
contingent expenses.....	25 31

For spring dividends.....	\$456 84	
farming	761 85	
superintending farming.....	150 00	
schools.....	469 02	
fall dividends	1,359 07	
bounty on crops (annuity).....	317 20	
salary of Governor of Tribe....	50 00	
Lieut.-Gov. "	40 00	
Priest "	100 00	
Indian Agent.....	133 33	
Cash on hand (being school balance),	341 59	
	<hr/>	\$5,844 92

RECEIPTS.

April 1, from J. N. Stowe (being balance of school funds),	\$310 61	
May 24, warrant.....	1,725 00	
October 14, "	3,190 00	
December, "	619 31	
	<hr/>	\$5,844 92

SHORE RENTS.

RECEIPTS.

April 1st, from J. N. Stowe, unexpended balance, \$379 51

CONTRA.

Paid members of Tribe who had not received their per capita share of February distribution.....	\$72 00
Paid on municipal account (Resolves of 1891).....	307 51
	<hr/>
	\$379 51

CENSUS.

On the first of January last the Tribe numbered 395 as per enumeration made by the school superintendent of Old Town, which shows an increase of nine for the year past.

SCHOOLS.

Within a period easily spanned by the memories of those of middle age, the school has become a potent factor in the life of the Penobscot Tribe. Taught on the Islands for many years with varying zeal and success, with frequent changes of teacher—from the earnest and faithful to those imbued with the thought of pay for ingenious killing of time, it has gradually overcome prejudice and indifference, and by wise and steady improvement of means and methods finally won a deep and growing regard in the minds and hearts of the people.

As is well known, the school on Old Town Indian island, to which the above has special reference; has been taught during the last fifteen years by the Sisters of Mercy, resident there most of that time; so that there have been but comparatively few changes of instructors during that period; thus has been imparted an element of strength, sought and appreciated in well ordered schools, which demand security of tenure for the capable teacher. With the increase of interest on the part of both parent and pupil, due largely to a better appreciation of the practical benefits of good schooling, have come growing demands for better facilities for instruction. It will be remembered that my predecessor in office, in his last annual report, pointed out the great and increasing need of a new school-house on Old Town Indian island. It is true the old house would answer for some years to come, if little regard were paid to health, comfort and convenience, and little thought given to extending school privileges to those who should and doubtless would avail themselves of such. Two teachers are now employed, and they find the accommodations, especially of the recitation room, cramped and meagre. The Legislature of 1891 made an appropriation of two hundred dollars for repairs to the old house; but inasmuch as the seating capacity could not be increased without a much larger outlay than this, it was thought that the money could not be wisely expended in repairs or additions; but that a new and larger house would be more economical in

the end, and that it is but a question of a few years only, when such a house, by some means will have to be provided. As to the money now on hand, and the additional amount required for such a purpose—I will say, that the sum of \$341.59 remains as unexpended school balance. The larger part of this is of the \$200 above referred to, only a small amount of the appropriation having been used, and that for the building of a storm porch. The remaining sum comes from unused up-river school balances, chiefly those of Mattanawcook island. The further sum of \$150 or possibly \$200 might be obtained by the sale of the present building; so that with an appropriation of \$500 by the State Legislature this winter, the much needed room and accommodations could be secured.

Such a school-house, would, I believe, arouse the pride and stimulate the flagging interest of those older scholars between the ages of fifteen and twenty, who drop out, partly because of crowded and inconvenient quarters, and partly because the teachers cannot give them proper attention, and at the same time do justice to the smaller pupils. Believing that the school here is doing a good work, and that by proper encouragement it will be able to extend its scope, and increase its usefulness, I earnestly recommend that this appropriation be made, to be available in 1893.

On Mattanawcook island no school has been taught for the last two years. The number of pupils there had become so few, by reason of the removals of families to Old Town island, and the inevitable loss due to maturing years, that the two or three left have been better and more cheaply provided for in the neighboring schools of Lincoln. In consequence, the appropriation for the island, for this purpose, may properly be reduced from \$125 to \$25 yearly for the next two years. And, inasmuch as two teachers will find constant employment in the school on Old Town island in place of one as heretofore, for the most part, it would seem but fair to increase the appropriation for this school by the amount of the reduction

at Lincoln, setting aside \$500 yearly in place of the usual \$400; while the total amount given for school purposes would remain the same as for many years past—viz. \$600—and by the arrangement proposed distributed as follows—\$25 to Mattanawcook, \$75 to Olamon and \$500 to Old Town Indian island.

AGRICULTURE.

Judging by the number of those engaged more or less in farming, there is a growing interest in this direction. It is probably, for reasons hereafter mentioned, that many of the tribe who have heretofore gone to the seaside resorts during summer, will now remain at home, thus insuring better and more constant attention to the growing crops.

This year the long drought of spring, followed by the frequent rains caused the harvest to be much lighter than was anticipated. Especially is this true of the potato yield. Subjoined is the list of crops upon which bounty was paid, viz.:

Potatoes, 3,165 bushels; beans, 196 bushels; peas, 52 bushels; oats, 1,091; vegetables, 481 bushels; buckwheat, 10 bushels.

ELECTION.

The biennial election for choice of officers of the tribe was held October 11th with the following result: Sebattis M. Francis was chosen Governor, Louis Peal Sock, Lieutenant-Governor, and Joseph Nicolar, Representative to the State Legislature.

The present law requires the election upon the second Tuesday of October, biennially. It happens, however, that very many of the young men of the tribe at this season of the year are engaged in their profitable vocation of guiding, and consequently cannot take part in the choice of officers, in which they are always much interested. It would therefore seem proper and just, that the election be so appointed as to give all those desiring it an opportunity to take part therein.

think I am expressing the general wish, when I recommend that the date of election be changed from the second Tuesday in October to the first Tuesday in November.

IN GENERAL.

Having been very severely visited by la grippe last winter, the Indians hoped to have a long respite from further sickness of a serious nature. This hope, at one time during the fall, seemed destined to disappointment; for measles, brought from Bar Harbor, gained a temporary foothold among them; and, to supplement this, two entire families returned from Moosehead lake seriously ill with typhoid fever, from which, however, they have since fully recovered. The sanitary conditions of the island, though not at fault in these instances, are not perfect, and an effort was made this fall to improve them, which efforts will be renewed upon the approach of spring. In consequence of this sickness, with its accompanying distress, the bills for medical attendance and food supplies aggregated a large amount the past year, and some accounts for medicine have to be carried over. The deaths for the past twelve months number ten, four adults and six children, which is not more than the average yearly number.

The sale of baskets by our Indians at the summer resorts has not been so profitable this year as oftentimes, owing chiefly to the sharp competition they meet at the hands of the Canadian Indians, who bring in their cheaper wares free of duty. To make the summer trip a paying one now, the Maine Indian must combine the steady worker, the prudent manager and the good salesman; and failing in any one of these directions, he can hardly hope to secure more than a mere livelihood.

In view of the fact that many of their white brothers who have been given to indulgence in intoxicating drinks have apparently found a permanent cure in the "Keeley" treatment, it becomes a serious question whether it is not the duty of the State or of the Indian agent to devote some money yearly to the reclaiming of those Indians who have become