

SIR: I have the honor to submit this my first annual report of the condition of affairs at this agency.

On the 21st day of October, 1878, I assumed my duties as Indian agent, and on the 26th day of December following an accurate census of the Indians was taken, and the enumeration showed 2,583 souls, men, women, and children, all Sioux, divided in four bands, viz: Upper Yanktonnais, Lower Yanktonnais, Uncapapas, and Blackfeet.

During the severe winter but little could be done by the Indians in the industrial arts, except chopping wood for the contractor for the military post at this agency. This labor the Indians performed--chopping 2,500 cords, for which they received one dollar per cord. The Indians evinced a strong desire for this class of work, and would have performed five times the amount of labor could they have found sale for their wood, but the demand for it was limited to the amount of the contract--2,500 cords.

FARMING.

When spring opened, the Indians exhibited a commendable inclination to go to farming more extensively than they heretofore had done. On the agency there was by actual measurement 706 acres of land that the prairie sod had been subdued on, and was in a fair state of cultivation. These 706 acres mentioned were wholly inadequate to furnish employment or raise a sufficient crop to feed so many mouths. I requested the Indians, in a general council, to settle down on separate farms. One hundred and twenty-two heads of families agreed to break up their tribal relations and take claims of 80 acres each. Authority was obtained from the honorable Commissioner to break additional 1,200 acres of prairie sod in tracts of ten acres each; this breaking to be done on the site where the Indians had laid out their claims and indicated as their future homes. Of these new farms 35 extend on the north to a point about 16 miles above the agency, and 86 to a point south twenty miles below the agency, on the Missouri River bank west.

On 80 of these farms a good substantial log house has been built and completed with panel doors and windows, and 32 more are in rapid progress of completion. These houses were in part built by the Indians, for which they received remuneration; but of a necessity much of it had to be done by white labor, as the Indians were deficient in tools, strong teams to haul the logs, and without knowledge of a workmanlike job or an idea of dispatch in performing work.

All the old land has been planted, and with but few exceptions the new land; seeds being furnished by the department. About 1,000 acres of the plowed surface is in Arickaree corn, probably 100 acres in potatoes, and the balance in beans, beets, carrots, turnips, melons, squash, and pumpkins. As all the land, with the exception of corn, is so subdivided among families and planted in patches it is difficult to estimate the exact acreage of roots. The Indians who took claims planted most of their root crops in old land in order to insure a good crop. The season has been favorable, and the crops are simply magnificent. The corn will average fully 30 bushels per acre on the old land, and 20 on the new, which will harvest 25,000 bushels of corn at least. A great deal of this corn the Indians prepare for winter use by boiling it in the cob, when it is in its milky state, then cutting it off the cob and drying it. In this way it not only makes a very nutritious but also a very palatable article of diet. Their root crop is, as I have before stated, planted in so many patches, and not yet having been gathered, it is hard to estimate it; but they have all with their limited facilities they can take care of. Pumpkins, squash, and melons can only be estimated by the wagonload, as the crop is immense, and squash and pumpkins are a great favorite with the Indians; easily prepared for cooking and easily