

The reduction by Congress of appropriations for subsistence of the Blackfeet, Blood, and Piegan Indians, and of the Indians at Fort Peck and Fort Belknap agencies, has already caused a great deal of suffering among these Indians, and is a source of constant and increasing anxiety and embarrassment to this office. It is true that the Indians show a willingness to add to the supplies furnished by the Government by taking advantage of such facilities for procuring subsistence as their reservations naturally afford or can be made to yield by cultivation; still it is clear that, from causes beyond their control or that of this Bureau, they have lately needed more assistance from the Government than formerly, as the game upon which they have depended principally for food and clothing has been gradually diminishing, until it is now nearly extinct, while repeated trials have shown that successful farming on these reservations would be impossible, even to whites, without the necessary irrigating ditches, fences, stock, & c., and for such purposes no funds have been supplied.

Speaking of the Blackfeet, Blood, and Piegan Indians in a report dated July 26 last, an Indian inspector says:

There can be no doubt but many of the young children died from lack of food during last winter and spring. Never before have I been called upon to listen in an Indian council to such tales of suffering. Three or four years ago this reservation abounded in game and these Indians were, practically, independent of the Government; now, nowhere else have I ever seen a country so destitute of it as this, and there is, practically, nothing for the people to live upon but what is furnished by the Government. I cannot believe that Congress was fully aware of the change in the surroundings of these Indians when the annual appropriation was diminished.

In reference to the same Indians a special agent reports, under date of August 21 last:

Last week 3,200 persons presented themselves as actually in need of subsistence, to furnish which, in the established quantities (which are found to be merely sufficient to sustain life) for the balance of the fiscal year, would require at least four times the quantity of flour supplied, and although but half a ration is issued, it will be all exhausted about midwinter, and all the beef available will be gone about the same time, although but one-fifth the established ration is being issued. I am fearful that starvation, and early action is necessary, unless additional supplies are furnished deprivations must be expected to prevent starvation, and early action is necessary, as the severe winter here renders transportation of supplies at that time impossible to this country.

This reservation cannot be farmed without irrigation, no preparation for which has been made; therefore but little can be expected from Indian cultivation, and as illustrative of the seasons here, this morning, August 21, the ground around the agency is covered with snow.

Under date of the 14th ultimo, an Indian inspector speaks of the Indians at the Fort Peck Agency, whose reservation adjoins that of the Blackfeet, & c., as follows:

During my visit all the Indians were in camp, having returned hungry from a hunt which was unsuccessful. They farm about 700 acres, nearly every field of which I visited. Their crops, which are principally corn, are a total failure, although well tended; the squaws, in many instances,