

164,027 - 15

Ottawa, 31st. October, 1903.

Sir:-

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of copy of Mr. Inspector Chisholm's report of his inspection of the Onion Lake Agency, transmitted by your office on 13th instant, and with regard thereto to inform you as follows:-

With reference to agriculture on the Seekaskoetch and Makao Reserves the small area cultivated, the facts that the fields are infested with noxious weeds, and that only some two acres of land have been summer fallowed or broken during the season just past, the mixture of different kinds of grain in one crop and the neglect of the gardens constitute what can only be regarded as a wretched showing.

From what the Inspector says to the effect that there are no really idle men who are able to work, and their willingness to take cattle, and the intelligent and energetic manner in which they set to work under somewhat discouraging circumstances to provide hay for them, the neglect of agriculture can hardly be attributed to laziness.

The Inspector points out several things by way of explanation and extenuation of what he describes, such as the small success which has attended the growing of cereals in the past, the distance to which Indians have to draw their grain to the thresher, the engine for which is a stationary one at the mill, the lack of a market for the disposal of their produce, and the conviction that the soil is too poor for profitable farming.

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Hon. David Laird,
Indian Commissioner,
Winnipeg, Man.

Indian Affairs, Letterbook,
10 October 1903 - 2 November 1903, (R.G. 10, Volume 5041)

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