

Efficient Indian Laborers

The major part of the work of turning the Colorado river from the Salton sink to its old channel was done by Indian laborers of the desert tribes, to whose efficiency Dr. A. L. Leeds pays warm tribute in an article in the current number of Forest and Stream. These Indians have long been accustomed to agriculture and to conducting irrigation workings on a small scale, and when given opportunity for regular work at fair wages, they grasped it eagerly. Indeed, they speedily proved themselves the most faithful and efficient of all the laborers employed upon this work. When the Mexican teamsters quit and went to work elsewhere, Indians were speedily broken in to take their places, and stayed by the job until it was finished. In a day or so work was moving as ever. This heavy work was done by the Indians during the summer, when the thermometer ranged between 112 and 118 in the shade. Even the Indian boys showed themselves willing and efficient workers.

The experience had with these Indians is not unlike the experience had in Western Washington with the Indians of this part of the world. From the earlier settlement of Puget Sound, the Indians here, never having been pauperized by the receipt of government bounties and rations, were willing to work for the white men. They handled lumber in the yards and loaded ships; they worked on farms and assisted in clearing much of the land put in cultivation. Few of them ever exhibited the distaste for labor which tradition assigns to the Indians.

Alaska Indians have always been willing workers, when given fair pay and decent treatment. During the earlier days of the Treadwell mine a large share of the working force consisted of Indians. They are fewer in num-

ber there now, a fact due, according to some observers, to the large number of casualties in that mine. At New Metlakatla, Indians follow almost every variety of occupation; have acquired comfortable homes on the white man's model, and collectively, constitutes as thrifty and industrious a community as can be found on the continent.

The reservation system is responsible for unthrift and the pauperism of the larger number of the American Indian, rather than any radical defect or any inherited unwillingness to labor.

[For the information of its readers the AMERICAN would add to the above editorial of the SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER that there are at the present time about fifty young Indian men from the Salem Indian School working in one of the construction parties on the new railroad line between Salem and Portland which runs through our grounds.

The pupils of the school during the last vacation period earned a large amount of money picking hops, threshing, working at carpenter, as machinists, and in other industrial pursuits. This they will use for their needs during the year. —EDITOR]

••• NESIKA CLUB

The Nesika Club met in Mitchell Hall Wednesday evening and elected the following officers: Pres. Eugene Williams; Sec. C. E. Larsen; Tres. Adolph Farrow.

The meeting was attended by six of last year's members and the amount of "Nesika spirit" shown would do credit to a number three times our size. Among the subjects discussed our absent members were not forgotten while our new members was an important subject. We have high hopes for another successful season.