

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

*Northern District of California, San Francisco, February 14, 1862.*

SIR: Having just returned from a visit to Klamath, the northwestern Indian reservation in the State, I hasten this special report concerning the disastrous flood at that place, and the action I have taken in relation to losses, and the necessary changes attendant upon the same.

On my arrival at that place, on the 15th of January, I found fields of bare cobblestone on one side and sand three feet deep on the other, which had taken the place of nearly every acre of arable land on the reservation, thereby totally destroying every hope of any success in the future.

Every panel of fencing, every Indian village, and every government building, (over 30,) except a barn, including the mill and threshing machine, together

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with all the harvested crops and stores belonging to the service, the farming and blacksmith's tools, hogs, fowls, and part of the cattle, all swept into the Pacific ocean, an account of which will appear more fully in the property return at the end of the quarter.

In this condition was the Klamath reservation, and no blame can be attached to those who located it there, for the "oldest inhabitant" among the Indians had never before witnessed such a flood.

The employes and Indians being almost destitute of food and shelter, no time was to be lost in their immediate removal.

Having previously travelled throughout every part of the northern district, and made necessary inquiries in regard to suitable locations for Indian farms, where they would be most secluded from white settlements, and after fully satisfying myself that no such place can be now found on government land in the whole State, for every valley is occupied by white settlers, and among all of those "Smith River Valley," from all accounts, presented the greatest advantages. Hence I visited that place, and finding it impregnable to floods, furnished with an abundance of fine timber and living springs, about twenty well-improved farms, under excellent fence, with dwelling-houses, barns, &c., two valuable water mills, (flour and saw,) young orchards, numbering several thousand trees, and about three thousand more in nurseries.

Upon inquiry, I found the few settlers not only willing, but very anxious to sell to the government at any price they could get, and at what I consider a very low rate.

Nearly all their farms are under mortgages, and they are anxious to have them released, so that they can go to the new mines, from which they hear such fabulous accounts of gold.

This valley is in the extreme northwest corner of the State, completely encompassed by ranges of mountains on the east and north, and the Pacific ocean on the south, with an entrance at the southeast end, in the direction of Crescent City, which place, when first laid out, was expected to be the port of entry to northern California; but, failing in that, the place has gone down, and consequently every person wishes to sell and leave.

There are no places for white people to settle within twenty or thirty miles east or fifty miles north; consequently, deeming it an auspicious opportunity, I have finally succeeded in negotiating a purchase of all the arable land in the valley on the north side of the river, about 5,000 acres in all, and nearly one-half of it under excellent fence, and in a high state of cultivation. This negotiation (on the part of the United States, of course) is subject to *approval* or refusal. Hence I submit the same to you for your recommendation or otherwise, as you may deem proper and right. In view, however, of the ratification of the purchase, I have used the precaution of securing deeds from all but two or three persons, who were absent at that time. Those deeds are in the hands of responsible persons, to be passed over to the United States for record when the money is paid and the encumbrances removed.

In connexion with this negotiation, I have caused a map to be made, including, with the purchase, an addition of 35,000 acres, entirely mountain and grazing lands, finely calculated for an Indian reservation. (Please find, accompanying, a traced copy of the map, also blank copy of the deeds.) These mountains contain an abundance of elk, deer, and other game highly esteemed by the Indians.

After having accomplished the negotiation, I at once removed one of the tribes, numbering between four and five hundred, and called the Humboldt Indians, from Klamath. These were so anxious to be removed that they actually travelled through snow, rain, and mud barefooted, over a distance of forty miles, to where they expected to find something to eat. On the journey two of

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the squaws each brought forth an heir, travelling on the next morning, with the new-comers on their backs, as though nothing of the kind had happened.

One condition of the purchase (but not expressed in the deeds) is, that when said purchase-money is paid all the farming tools, together with all the crops unharvested, is to pass over to the government, and immediate possession given. So sanguine indeed are the settlers that the purchase will be ratified that several have given me full possession already and gone off to the mines.

Five dollars per acre is the lowest rent it can be obtained at, and should the purchase fall through, I am to pay that same rent for all the land I cultivate. Whereas you will observe that the entire cost of the valley, containing five thousand acres, is only about \$59,500, and would be less than \$12 per acre.

All the improvements are nearly new. The mill alone cost over \$12,000, and it is estimated that there are two millions of cedar or redwood rails, eleven feet long, in fences.

Believing there is sufficient arable land in the proposed purchase to maintain all the Indians in the northern district who cannot be conveniently removed to *Nome Cult* or elsewhere, I have requested Brigadier General Wright to remove all the Indians he may succeed in taking with his troops to Smith River valley, where I have purchased a moderate supply of beef, cows, hogs, vegetables, &c., at a price less than the freight would be from San Francisco to the other reservations. I have procured seed, and will try and cultivate 300 or 400 acres, so that there will be an ample supply for all the Indians that may be removed there this year. It is important, however, while American cattle can be bought at from \$12 to \$16 per head, that a good supply be secured, as the late immense losses by floods will soon cause an active rise in the price of cattle.

I have two or three rough carpenters engaged, helping to construct Indian houses. Two men, with Indian assistance, build one every day. I am arranging them in villages, which they prefer, with a lot of ground attached to every house for a family. These lots, 80 by 160, are to be set with fruit trees and berries, and properly cultivated.

It is a fact, notorious to every observer of Indians in this country, that those who have been reared and always lived in the interior, and used to feed on fresh fish, hare, squirrels, acorns, and grasshoppers, as their staple articles of food, will never willingly be confined to a reservation on the coast; and, *vice versa*, those raised on the coast, and accustomed to sea fish and weed, cannot be induced to remain in the interior. Hence the propriety of suiting their homes to their early training and liking.

At Smith river there are all the advantages of a salmon fishery, seals, &c. and my object is to have them imitate the white men both in farming and their domestic concerns; and as far as I have tried this experiment, it seems to please and gladden the heart of every Indian.

The government cannot but see, if they give the matter the least consideration, that an appropriation of \$60,000 to secure this location will accomplish more than \$200,000, to pay the expense of fitting up new farms, buildings of every kind, new mills, planting orchards, &c.; all of which are now on this place ready for use. Good buildings for the employes, barns to store away the products, mills to prepare the materials for bread, and building Indian villages.

Hoping that my course will be approved and recommended by yourself, and that the money will be ready to secure the purchase by or before the time the harvests are ripe, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

GEO. M. HANSON,

*Superintendent Indian Affairs, Northern District of California.*

Hon. WM. P. DOLE,

*Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington.*