

### **Policy of the Indian Legislation of California.**

That portion of Governor Johnson's last annual Message which treated of the policy that should hereafter be observed in legislating upon Indian matters in California, was referred by the Assembly to the Committee on Indian Affairs for their consideration and report. The Committee, by their Chairman, S. G. Whipple, recently reported on the subject. It will be recollected that the Governor had recommended the abandonment of the Reservation system within the bounds of the State, and the removal of the different Indian tribes to the country lying east of the Sierra Nevada. The Committee do not coincide with this recommendation. They say:

Along the western frontiers of the Atlantic States, the process of commingling and affiliating the more civilized tribes, and steadily pressing them forward in advance of the march of civilization into the territories of the more formidable and savage nations beyond the borders, (where all those tribes and nations live by the chase and have the same general habits,) has rendered the policy of the Government on that side of the mountains reasonable and proper. But physical circumstances on the Pacific slope, render the adoption of the same policy in this State incompatible with the condition of the Indians within its limits.

The high plains and naked mountain wastes, from the eastern boundary of our State to the western base of the Rocky Mountains, are inhabited by roving bands of mounted savages, who maintain a precarious existence, mainly by the chase; whilst the tribes along the coast, and most of those in the interior of the State, are much beneath them both physically and intellectually. The California tribes feed upon the fishy yield of the ocean, or the acorns and crickets of the interior; they are unaccustomed to the management of the horse, and are in every way incapable of procuring a subsistence if placed in competition with their more active and daring neighbors. To remove these Indians from the State, and force them into the territory beyond the Sierras, were little better or more humane than at once to doom them to extermination, and could be accomplished only by an immense sacrifice of human life, and at the expense of millions of dollars.

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It is very certain that the rapid peopling of the West, and particularly the establishment of our indomitable race along this western line of the Continent, must soon solve us the vexed problem: Shall the Indian be exterminated? or, has he, too, a destiny to fulfil here? The Committee are amongst those who yet believe that the Indian race may be prolonged to the indefinite future; not as the equal, but subordinate to and dependent upon the dominant race. And for this object, a system of industrial education should be fostered by the Government, by which all the young Indians, of both sexes, may be taught agriculture and the ruder branches of the mechanical arts: under which proper incentives to emulation should be given; and which should extend to all the ramifications of their rude society, so that, by the next generation, the head of each family upon the Reservation shall find it alike his ambition and his interest to support himself and his family. It is very apparent that no rude and barbarous race can be elevated even to an approximate condition of equality with civilized men; except, perhaps, after long years of labor, either in personal servitude or national pillage; and as we consider the former, in this instance, to be entirely impracticable, we would urge upon the attention of the General Government the propriety, nay, the high moral necessity, of speedily adopting the latter in a greater and more general extent. It is not incumbent upon the Committee to elaborate this idea, but they trust that those charged with our Indian affairs at Washington will give it that attention its great importance demands. Experience has shown that all attempts by the Government, or by others, to elevate the Indian by mere intellectual or religious culture, or both combined, have either failed altogether or resulted in positive evil, as the educated savage is almost sure to become an avenger of the—  
—enormous wrongs of his doomed race—too surely doomed, if not redeemed by labor.

There can be no safety to the settlers in the vicinity of the Reservations, until the Indians are made to feel that they have left their lands by their own choice and for a proper consideration. We cannot expect cheerful obedience to the will of our Superintendent and local Agents, as long as a sense of wrong and injustice is rankling in their hearts against us. The worst feature, and the one most to be deprecated, in the lame and impotent policy heretofore maintained by the government in its management of our Indian affairs, is its failure to extinguish, by fair purchase, the Indian title to the lands from which they have been sought to be removed.

The Committee feel it their duty to remark that there is much danger to be apprehended, from the fact that the fascinations of Indian society appear to have attracted a class of white men, addicted to most of the low vices to which humanity is heir: who are a half

ing and dangerous. The agents of the government cannot be too vigilant in guarding their charge from the contaminating influence of such pests to society and to the State.

There should be efficient military forces stationed in convenient positions in the vicinity of all the Reservations, and enlarged power should be given to the local agents in the management of the latter, in the employment of additional attachees, or in any matters which would conduce to the good or the well being of the poor proscribed Indian.

Your Committee feel it to be the duty of the present Legislature to call the attention of the general government to the state of affairs in the north-eastern part of the State. Since the first settlement by the whites of that section, many brutal murders have been committed annually by the untamed savage; and during the last year, the citizens of Siskiyou county alone have expended more than two hundred thousand dollars in endeavoring to conquer a peace. There should be immediately an Agency or Reservation established in the Pitt River or Modoc Indian country, with a strong military force. Until this be done, it may be expected that those warlike tribes will periodically visit the settlements to destroy property and murder the inhabitants.

The Committee conclude their report by recommending the passage by the Legislature of the following joint resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the system of colonizing the Indians of this State upon Reservations within our borders is, under all circumstances, the most humane, economical and practicable, of any plan that can be adopted.

*Resolved*, That to render this plan effective, it is of the first importance that the lands be purchased from the Indians when they are required to leave their old homes and live upon the Reservations.

*Resolved*, That the Indian Department should encourage the system of education at labor, as the best and surest mode of elevating the Indian character.

*Resolved*, That there should be an increase of the military force in the vicinity of the Indian Reservations, and in the remote parts of this State.

*Resolved*, That there should be a Reservation established in the vicinity of the Pitt River and Modoc Indian country, accompanied by a strong military force. Also a Reservation in San Bernardino county.

*Resolved*, That the Governor be requested to send copies of the foregoing to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

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**SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 1857.**

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