

No. 38.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
San Francisco, Cal., June 1, 1864.

SIR: I notified you on the 27th that I had filed my bond and entered upon the discharge of my duties; I also notified you that I had appointed a temporary special agent for that portion of the State formerly known as the southern district. In view of the fact that the property in the southern district is in so many different places, and government has no land there that may be called its own, I have directed the special agent to collect the property together and move it on the Tule River farm, which I find has been leased to Mr. Wentworth for a term of two years, commencing in July, 1863. I have also directed him to collect as many of the Indians from the vicinity of Fort Tejon and from the Tejon farm as practicable, and take them to the Tule River farm, which appears to be the only place in the district where anything is being raised for their subsistence, and the only place where they can live in peace. He is further instructed not to allow the Indians to suffer for food so long as there is anything at his command to feed them with. The mules and horses in that department he is instructed to drive to Round valley, if, in his judgment, the effects of the drought will endanger their lives during the season. At Round valley the feed is splendid, and they can be sent south again next winter, after the rains commence, in time to put in crops. Besides, it will cost nothing to keep them at Round valley. With the aid of the crop at the Tule River farm, and the recent rains in the extreme southern part of the State, I have reason to hope that the Indians there will not suffer much this season, or, at least, until such time as I can visit them and see to their wants in person. I am induced to the belief that there is no immediate danger of starvation among them, from a letter received by Colonel Curtis, commanding southern military district, bearing date of 22d ultimo, in which he says: "The Yumas and other bands along the Colorado river are as badly off as any of the Indians, and recent advices from that country state that the crop of mesquite, which is their principal reliance, will be large this year." Colonel Curtis is well posted in matters pertaining to the southern Indians. He also informs me that pretty much all the Owen's river Indians, which were moved to the Tejon reservation two years since, have left and returned to their old haunts; what few are left I will cause to be removed to the Tule River farm.

It is much to be regretted that government could not have held possession of the Tejon ranches for reservation purposes. It was originally the peaceable abode of many Indians, and having been taken possession of by the depart-

ment for a reservation, and having an immense amount of government money expended upon it in that capacity, it is certainly a hardship, not to use a harsher term, that the Indians should be driven from it to seek new abodes upon rented farms contiguous to white settlements, and their fine pasture lands and fields given over to the herds and laborers of him who expended the government money in improving the lands for the ostensible benefit of the Indians. I refer to E. P. Beale, who holds possession of the entire ranch under government patent. There is some little government property on the ranch yet, which Mr. Beale is modest enough to admit belongs to the Indian department. In charge of this, Mr. Wentworth has a supervisor and employé. I have directed all the property to be moved off, and both the men to be discharged. I am well convinced that, if such a thing be possible, government should own the Tejon ranch. There would be no difficulty in collecting all the interior Indians in that section of the State and subsisting them there; but as I am directed to have economy in view in selecting reservations, I can make no suggestions further than this, until I have visited that section, which will be as soon as I return from a trip north, perhaps in the course of two weeks.

Matters in the north, both on the reservations and off of them, with the exception of the districts where the Indians are hostile, are in better condition. This has been a fruitful season for the Indians there; clover, fish, and roots being abundant. Besides, there are good crops at Round valley and Mendocino, which will go far towards subsisting them next winter. I was up that way some weeks since, and thought things looked well. I will, however, give you further details when I have made an official visit and received the property. Before making an official visit to Round valley, I may as well inform you that my mind has long since been made up that nature intended that valley for a reservation. Its location in the heart of an Indian country, the fertility of its soil, its immense natural resources for Indian food, its remote locality—entirely without the reach of white men or white settlements, (providing government should own the whole of it)—all go far towards recommending it as the only suitable place in the northern part of the State adapted for such a purpose. I presume the department has been advised from time to time by my predecessors of the condition of things there, of the annoyance of settlers who have claims and improvements in the valley, and of their defiant attitude and open hostility to the government. In a word, steps should be taken at once by the department to have a survey of this valley made by the surveyor general, and settlement made with the white settlers, as is provided for in the consolidation act of April 8, 1864. I believe the valley, or part of it, has been surveyed, but it would be well to have the work done over, so that I may be posted as to the boundaries. Twenty-five thousand acres would cover all the valley and enough of the surrounding mountains to preclude the possibility of a white man getting a piece of land on which he could live within twenty-five miles of the valley.

Upon this reservation, if what I have suggested be carried out, all the Indians south of Bel river and west of the Sacramento valley range of mountains, including the valleys of Ukiah and Russian river, would willingly go if they could be provided with food and shelter, and not be molested by white men. The Indians on the Smith River and Mendocino reservations could likewise be removed to Round valley. They are much the same class of Indians as those in the vicinity of Round valley, and are not considered dangerous or hostile. These, however, will remain where they are until the crops on the Mendocino and Smith River farms are gathered and eaten, and provision made for their reception at Round valley, as above indicated. A bad feeling exists between Mr. Melinday, supervisor at Round valley, and Captain Douglass, the commanding officer of the military. I will cause the removal of the supervisor when I go up, and appoint a special temporary agent in his place, so

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that the Indian and military departments may not be inimical to each other. Mr. Bryson, at Smith river, and Mr. Whipple, at Mendocino, it is my intention to retain, if I find matters under their charge as I have reason to expect.

It might be well for me to mention here, that there is a large number of Indians between Smith river and Round valley that I have not included among those that could be kept upon the Round Valley reservation, or any other reservation north of San Francisco. I refer to the Klamath, Redwood, and Trinity Indians, with whom we now are at war. At present, I will not go into details concerning the nature and numbers of these Indians, but will simply say a reservation must be provided for them south of San Francisco, from whence there is no chance of return. I did hope, for this purpose, the government would have favorably received the proposition to place them upon the Santa Catalina island, but I have been informed by Mr. Conness that the department does not favor the project. At present there are about three hundred of these Indians prisoners at Humboldt bay, held and fed by the military department. These are a class of Indians that cannot be turned loose; neither can they be sent to either one of the reservations north, which would be just the same as turning them loose, as bitter experience, in times gone by, has proved. In view of this, I have induced General Wright to order the commanding officer of that district to hold them until such time as your department, through my earliest efforts and suggestions, shall provide a place and transportation for them south. My residence has been among those Indians since I was a mere boy, and I have suffered from their hostilities. My experience enables me to assert positively that no means can be devised which will bring peace to that distracted district, except the removal of the Indians to some point south of San Francisco. Our great misfortune has been in the management of Indian affairs in the north; that our military commanders and superintendents have labored under the delusion that these Indians might be kept and treated on the northern reservations, the same as others. Acting under this belief in 1858, Mr. Henly removed nine hundred to Mendocino, and in 1860 Mr. Hanson removed eleven hundred to Smith river. I presume it is safe to say that not one of those Indians remained where they were placed longer than two months; all returning to their old haunts, as was well known would be the case by the settlers. It cost the government not less than \$200,000 to catch them, and they came back doubly embittered against the whites, and more positively hostile than before. The military operations are progressing well there, and I am anxious to be able to co-operate as soon as possible.

This letter may seem somewhat out of place, as I have not yet made an official visit to the reservation; but as I have been requested to communicate freely with the department, I have thrown out these suggestions from facts within my knowledge, and, through them, I trust the department may gather some stray shadows of what my policy in this department will be. Of course I can say nothing of the condition of affairs on the reservations until I have visited them; neither can I make any estimate for funds, further than for salaries, for which the law provides. There should also be a transportation fund, but I can set no figure, for I cannot tell how many Indians can be removed within the year.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

AUSTIN WILEY,
Superintendent Indian Affairs.

Hon. CHARLES E. MIX,
Acting Commissioner, Washington.