
No. 42.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office Indian Affairs, July 9, 1864.

SIR: I have received your letters of the 1st and 4th ultimo in relation to the affairs of your superintendency.

I am informed by these letters that there are some five hundred Indian prisoners held by the military authorities at Humboldt bay, and that more will be brought in soon. You also state that "several months must necessarily elapse" before a reservation can be located under the recent act of Congress, and suggest that you be directed to provide a temporary home south of San Francisco, near the military reservation at San Pedro or upon Catalina island.

At this distance, I am unable to perceive the reason requiring several months for the location of a reserve under the provision of the recent law for the reorganization of Indian affairs within your State, and especially in this case with reference to that portion of the State heretofore known as the northern district. The statements of former superintending agents, without exception, are to the effect that Round valley, by its peculiarly isolated position, the extent of its arable land, and its close proximity to rivers and to the mountains, affording a fair supply of fish and abundance of game, is most admirably adapted to the purpose, and is of sufficient capacity to accommodate a majority of the Indians of that portion of the State. In these views I am led, by expressions contained in your letter of the 1st ultimo, to believe that you concur. I assume, then, that nothing remains to be done, so far as the permanent establishment of this reserve

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is concerned, except the negotiation with settlers *rightfully* there for the purchase of their claims, and a proper defining of its boundaries. In advance of even these preliminary arrangements, I see no reason why the number of Indians on the reservation may not be almost immediately largely increased.

I presume that ere this reaches you you will have received instructions relative to negotiations with the Indians of northern California and southeastern Oregon, and I trust that you and Superintendent Huntington, who is associated with you, will find it convenient to enter upon the discharge of this duty with but little delay. I feel very sanguine that the result of this negotiation will, to a very great extent, if not entirely, remove all occasion for a further prosecution of military operations against the Indians in the northern part of the State. As at present advised, I cannot consent that you should relieve the military authorities of the care and subsistence of the Indians now held by them as prisoners. It has ever been customary for the War Department to provide for the necessities of their prisoners during the continuance of hostilities. When the Indians shall have been subdued by military force, or induced to submit by peaceable negotiation, I apprehend that but little difficulty will be encountered in securing their concentration upon the Round Valley reserve, or upon such other reservation as I hope to learn will then have been established. Until that time there is no appropriation at the disposal of this department which is specifically applicable to defraying the expense of feeding and providing for Indians in military custody; and although the expense might be defrayed from the general appropriation for your superintendency, yet the amount appropriated is so limited, when considered with reference to the ordinary demands, that it will require the utmost prudence and economy to confine expenditures absolutely required within its limits. Liabilities have heretofore been incurred for the Indian service in California, (sometimes with, but more frequently without, authority from this department,) relying upon the future action of Congress for their payment. This practice, more than all others, has served to paralyze our efforts in behalf of the Indians and bring the service into disrepute, and I cannot too strongly impress upon you the importance of hereafter creating no liabilities for which provision has not been made. The same objection applies with equal force to the proposed removal of the Indians now in custody, and those that may hereafter be captured, to a point south of San Francisco, "near the military reservation about San Pedro or on Catalina island;" and were this not the case, my information is such that I feel assured such a movement, aside from the great expense involved in the removal, and in subsisting the Indians after their arrival, would be very unwise on our part, and exceedingly disastrous to the Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. P. DOLE, *Commissioner.*

AUSTIN WILEY,
Sup't Indian Affairs, San Francisco, California.