
No. 54.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDING AGENT SOUTHERN DISTRICT,
San Francisco, California, July 14, 1861.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17th of April, ultimo, informing me of my appointment as superintending agent for the Indians of the southern district of this State.

In conformity to the instructions contained therein, I executed my "official bond" in the sum of \$50,000, which was placed in the hands of Augustus D. Rightmire, esq., my predecessor in office, and by him transmitted to the department on the 23d of May, ultimo, by pony express.

Having carried out my instructions as far as they appertain to this city, on the 5th ultimo I started, in company with Mr. Rightmire, on a visit to the different reservations embraced within this district, for the purpose of instigating

a thorough examination into their affairs, with a view of reporting their condition and wants at as early a period as practicable.

I now have the honor to report the following as the substance of my investigations:

The Fresno reservation having been abandoned, and the government property remaining thereon removed to King's River farm, it was the first place demanding my attention. The farm is situated on the right bank of King's river, about ten miles distant from the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevadas. It contains three hundred and fifty acres of arable land; is substantially fenced, and otherwise improved by a system of irrigation. As is well known at the department, from the reports of my several predecessors in office, this farm is claimed as the private property of Messrs. William and Edward Campbell, citizens of Tulare county, with whom arrangements have been made from time to time, by the different Indian superintendents, for its occupation by the government.

In order to secure the interests of the Indian service in this region, and in the absence of any alternative for the protection and subsistence of the Indians residing thereon, Mr. Rightmire was compelled to make arrangements with the Messrs. Campbells for its continued occupation. Situated as these miserable people are, in the centre of an advancing white population, who are inimical to them, and opposed to their remaining in their midst, and evince a deadly hostility to their roving propensities, necessity demands some step to be taken calculated to provide them with an abode secure from the intrusion of settlers, and where they themselves can be restrained from committing depredations upon their neighbors' property by the vigilant eye of the government.

While I am aware of the necessities demanding the course pursued by my predecessor, I am fully convinced that it is but a temporary alleviation of their wants, and that their future protection and welfare rest upon the adoption of a policy tending to remove them from their present abodes to homes prepared for them by government beyond the influences of white men.

The King's River farm possesses many of the advantages requisite for an Indian reservation. It does not present that isolation from the white settlement so absolutely necessary to the complete success of the system proposed by the government; nor is the extent of country occupied by it sufficient to meet the habits and wants of a people whose education so tends to migratory existence. Apart from the daily necessities of the Indian in the way of food, he requires space that he may indulge in those wandering propensities of which he is the natural heir. Confinement within the space of two or three hundred acres is to him but as the yard of a prison, in which he soon sickens and dies. King's River farm, then, only offers in its extent sufficient land to cultivate what he absolutely requires for subsistence. The absence of other advantages induces me to seek out a home for them where their range can be extended. With this view my attention was turned to the Indian farm situated on Tulé river, sixty miles further south, and one hundred and ten miles from the Tejon reservation. This farm is located up the Tulé River bottom, and contains a few acres of good land, which has been cultivated by Indian labor under circumstances similar to King's River farm. It is claimed as the private property of Thomas Madden, esq., of this city. Its immediate vicinity to the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada renders it a desirable residence for the Indians, besides possessing most of the advantages presented by the King's River farm. In consideration of the fact that this place can be obtained from Mr. Madden at a rate far below the price demanded by the owners of the King's River farm, I propose, through the approbation of the department, to secure it for the temporary use of the Indian service, and to remove as many of the Indians as possible from the King's River farm and its vicinity to it. The latter place will then be abandoned, and the Indian service in this district be released from one source of expense. Apart from the advantage immediate to the department, this step presents it as the

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first towards the adoption of a policy which I am convinced will eventually be forced upon the government—the concentration of the numerous bands of Indians now scattered throughout this district upon one or more permanent reserves. The natural course of the Indian emigration, as it is gradually crowded out by civilization and settlement, is southward. When once collected upon Tulé River farm, the Tejon next offers the inducements of a home to them, where, with proper management, they can be permanently maintained and protected by the government.

I know of no other tract of country within this district proposing the advantages for the purposes so much desired as the Tejon reservation. It is situated immediately within the junction of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast range of mountains which bound it on three sides, while its front is protected from settlement by an open arid plain known as the Kern River desert. The quantity of land enclosed within the grant upon which it is situated exceeds twenty-five thousand acres, apart from the extended mountain range it presents to the Indian. A large portion of this land is susceptible of a high state of cultivation, and the whole presents one of the finest ranges for stock of all kinds to be found within the limits of this State. Under a judicious system I am confident this place can be made self-sustaining, and that all the Indians in this district north of it can be concentrated upon it, and supported with little expense to the government after the first year's sufficient appropriation to establish it. I am sorry to report that at present it presents all the evidence of decay and mismanagement. Nothing of any importance in the cultivation of the land has been done this season. The Indians are left dependent upon their own efforts for subsistence, which is gained in a few instances by the cultivation of small patches of ground on their own account.

Under these circumstances it is impossible to correctly estimate the number of Indians belonging to this reservation by the number present, as many are, no doubt, driven to the mountains in search of those necessities denied them on the reserve. The same obtains with the number of Indians who are ranked as belonging to the King's River and Tulé River farms.

The amount of public property remaining upon the several farms, as exhibited in my returns, is small, and is much worn. A very considerable appropriation will be required to replace them for the necessary operations the coming season.

By reference to the reports of Hon. J. Y. McDuffie, late superintendent of Indian affairs, and superintending agent, it will be seen that the greater portion of the appropriation for the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1860, was expended on the northern portion of his superintendency, its necessities demanding his greater attention in consequence of the rapid occupation of the country adjacent to the northern reservations by white settlers. Again: his efforts to advance the interests of the southern reserves met with many obstacles and hindrances, the particulars of which have often been reported to the department by special agents whose duty it was made to inquire into their condition. Hence the small amount of property remaining on hand at present is mostly the refuse of what was supplied by Colonel W. J. Henley, late superintendent, or his predecessor, E. F. Beale, esq., the best of which being the remainder of what was supplied by the latter gentleman. Nothing of substantial importance has been purchased of late years. In consideration of these facts, it appears to me that the Tejon reservations, in particular, is entitled to a new outfit of animals and agricultural implements, with which, I am confident, a satisfactory return can be made in the future operation of the reservation. This outfit, to be complete, will entail an expenditure of from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

I am particularly anxious to call your attention to the necessity of revising the law now existing regulating the employment and payment of employes. The number of hands required on a large reservation, like all extended farming enterprises of a private character, depends greatly upon the season and circum-

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stances—the first in a great measure regulating the demand. During the season of planting and harvesting a larger number of assistants are required than during the remainder of the year, when the discipline and control of the Indian is only required to be attended to, when the four employes provided by the present law are amply sufficient.

With a sufficient force of white men to supervise and direct the farming operations of the reservation during the busy seasons of planting and harvesting a greater number of Indians can be kept at work and amount of ground ploughed and planted, at the expiration of which seasons the extra white laborers can be discharged. In this manner the extended lands the Tejon reserve offers for agricultural purposes can be availed of, and sufficient produced to relieve the government from the necessity of purchasing articles of subsistence for the Indians.

The present law also provides that a sum "not exceeding \$50 per month should be paid employes." Apart from the fact that this sum being less than the current rates of labor in this State for farmers, the consideration of the isolated situation of the southern reserves, rendering the transportation of provisions on their own private account very expensive, (for they are compelled to subsist themselves, the issuing of rations having been prohibited by the department,) renders the procuring of suitable persons for the sum indicated impracticable. Again: the necessities of the reservation system in this district demand the services of the best class of farmers, the sparsely settled condition of the adjacent country rendering the replacing of any one who may have proved himself incompetent or unworthy extremely difficult and embarrassing, and which necessity too often occurs among those persons who are willing to work for "under wages."

I desire to suggest that the law be revised so as to confine the number of employes within the discretion of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as circumstances may demand, and that the allowance per month be made not to exceed \$75 per man, and that, in addition thereto, rations be allowed to employes permanently residing on the reservation as well as those who may be temporarily employed during the seasons indicated.

As yet it has not been in my power to visit the entire district intrusted to my charge. The Indians residing in the vicinity of San Bernardino, San Diego, and along the sea-shore of the more southern portion of Los Angeles county, I am happy to say, are reported as being peaceably inclined and contented. It is my intention to visit these tribes at the earliest practicable moment, when I shall report to the department my views regarding the best method of providing for their necessities, and of affording them the protection for which they are now indebted to the forbearance and generosity of the community among whom they live. The extreme southern portion of this district, the Colorado and Mojave country, will, in due time, receive my attention. As the Indians residing there are under, however, more particularly, the surveillance of the military force stationed there, are kept in a state of quiet. Not having been as yet subjected to any reservation system, my operations in that region can only be advisory.

It affords me great pleasure, on the present occasion, to bear testimony to the prompt action of Colonel A. D. Rightmire, my predecessor in office, in placing me in possession of the public property belonging to this district, and to his desire to facilitate my efforts in furthering the interests of the public service.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. P. H. WENTWORTH,
Sub-Agent Southern District of California.

Hon. WM. P. DOLE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.