

212 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

No. 32.

OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS, NORTHERN DISTRICT CALIFORNIA,  
*San Francisco, July 18, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report for the quarter ending June 30, 1863.

Having now made a tour to all the Indian reservations in the northern district of this State, I am happy to say, truly, that the prospect of an abundant crop is very flattering indeed, especially so at Round and Smith River valleys. At the latter place I spent some thirteen days, during which time I canvassed well the acts of the supervisor and other employés in the service, also the condition of the Indians as to the health and want of clothing, &c., and have arrived at the following conclusion, viz., that, notwithstanding more has been done, and the management generally has been far better at this reservation than at either of the others, it was quite apparent that more married men should be brought into the service as soon as possible, and those who are unmarried discharged. Hence I employed three men with their wives, who have already commenced their services. Two of them are good carpenters as well as good farmers, and the other is a good farmer and miller.

The unsettled condition of three-fourths or more of the Indians, who have been compelled to lie on the cold, damp ground ever since their removal from Klamath and Humboldt counties, has caused disease, and death in many instances, to avoid which I have rented one of the saw-mills in the valley, with which the Indians and one or two white men, with our own teams, can, in a short time, make sufficient lumber to build some houses, and keep them more comfortable through the next winter. I give one-half of the lumber cut for the use of the mill; this is high rent, but it saves paying out money. I have sent the supervisor (Mr. Bryson) and another man off to Oregon to purchase some team-horses, as we have been compelled to hire teams at high rates this year, as well as last. I send to Oregon for the reason that horses are much cheaper there than in California. I have ascertained that only 130 out of 840 Indians which were removed to Smith River reservation from Humboldt bay last September, ever returned; and that little band, with their chief, Las-ac, left the first night after they landed in the valley. Las-ac, I hear, has since been killed.

I am now constructing a hospital at Smith River valley, and as soon as it is finished, will make an effort, by the close attention of the physician, to banish the most loathsome of diseases from among the Indians; but while the more degraded men of the white race are permitted to live in reach of, and come in contact with them, I almost despair of success.

The Indians on all the reservations continue to labor faithfully. I have seen as high as 363 of them all in the field at once, laboring, all of whom drew rations as laborers; nearly or quite one-half of that number were squaws and children, who, having no hoes or other farming tools, substituted their fingers. They are very destitute of clothing, only an occasional Indian wearing a whole garment, and not a whole blanket could be found among 100 Indians; and their constant inquiry was: "When *Captain Lincoln, big chief*, send Indians plenty blankets?"

I believe the change of supervisors at the Mendocino and Round Valley reservations is already having a salutary effect; and I now think that the growing crops on these two reservations, when harvested, will furnish an abundance of bread material and vegetables for all the Indians now on these two reservations until another crop can be harvested. Hence, in view of further economy, I beg leave to submit to your department what I consider an important suggestion, viz: after the produce on the Mendocino reservation is harvested, to transport the most of it, and *all* the mountain Indians, together with the farming

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tools, teams, &c., to Round valley, leaving one employe with the coast Indians until they consume the balance of the crops, and then remove them to Smith River reservation, where there will be quite a surplus of products from the present crops, perhaps more than enough to supply them. By pursuing this course, the Mendocino employes could all be discharged and the reservation abandoned, as was the Nome-Lackee, and the public buildings left in charge of some persons, to whom the land could be rented until authorized to be sold. This would greatly strengthen the Round valley teams, and add to the supply of tools.

When I came into office I took the responsibility to abandon Nome-Lackee reservation *without consulting your department, for the following reasons*: it had not been fenced, and could not be except at great cost, and without fencing no crops could be raised, as none had been during the two years previous, on account of the settlers' stock of all kinds that overran the lands. Mendocino reservation has but few Indians compared with either Round valley or Smith river; and as the distance between Mendocino and Round valley is only some fifty-five or sixty miles, all the transportation can be done by our own teams and by the Indians. By the abandonment of this reservation, over six or seven thousand dollars will be saved annually, and the Indians taken away from a population of whites who are more degraded than the Indians themselves. True, they would be removed to reservations infested with the same class, but not to such an extent.

There would be a saving also of ten, or perhaps twenty times as much more to the public treasury, as the necessity of keeping a company of United States troops at that place, Fort Bragg, would be entirely done away with.

I give this as my opinion after due consideration, believing that the fewer reservations we have, the better they can be conducted; and it will be attended with a saving of thousands of treasure to the government.

Hoping to hear from you on this subject, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

GEORGE M. HANSON,

*Superintending Agent Indian Affairs, Northern District California.*

Hon. WILLIAM P. DOLE,  
*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

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