
No. 27.

SMITH RIVER INDIAN FARM,
California, July 27, 1867.

SIR: In compliance with the requirements of the Indian department, I have the honor to submit the following as my first annual report, relative to the condition of Indian affairs on the Smith River Indian reservation, California:

Having assumed the duties of agent of this branch of the department on the 13th of February last, I take great pleasure in bearing testimony to the uniform good conduct of the Indians of this agency since I have been among them. They seem to cherish the most kindly feeling towards the whites, and are very friendly with the different tribes of Indians in the neighborhood of the reservation.

The number placed under my charge was estimated at 400, including men, women, and children. It was impossible, at the time, to take an exact census, but I am satisfied that I received nearly, if not quite as many as were estimated.

The only cause of discontent existing in their minds at this time is the constant fear of being removed from here to a less desirable location. I am fully satisfied that this constant fear of being removed was the sole cause of so many having left here during the administration of former agents. I have used every possible means at my command to convince them that our government will ultimately purchase the greater portion of this valley (Smith River) for their future permanent homes. By talking in this manner I have managed to keep them from running off back to their old homes in Humboldt county.

The land occupied by the Indians at this agency is all leased from settlers in the neighborhood, and a more desirable location for an Indian reservation cannot be found on the Pacific coast. Its natural advantages cannot be surpassed in any country, bounded, as it is, on the west by the Pacific ocean and on the south by Smith river, on the north and east, as it is, completely surrounded by a low range of mountains. From all of these natural resources the Indians for centuries past have been enabled to subsist without the aid of the whites. The ocean and river furnish inexhaustible supplies of every known variety of fish, (and from the fact that most of the Indians under my charge were born and raised on the coast makes it more desirable to them than an inland location,) while the surrounding hills contain game of every description in great abundance. The entire valley is well watered and well timbered, and in every way well adapted for the future homes of these "poor unfortunate wards of the government."

Although our spring was very late I have succeeded in cultivating about 250 acres of land, as follows: 70 acres of wheat, 45 acres of oats, 45 acres of potatoes, 23 acres of peas, and about 60 acres of timothy hay. In addition to the above there is about seven acres planted in carrots, turnips, and other vegetables, the whole of which was put in by Indian labor, under the supervision of the employes on the farm.

I regret very much to be compelled to say that my crops are not looking as

110 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

well as they promised in early spring; this is owing entirely to the continued extremely dry weather of the past two months. There has been no rain here at all for nearly three months, which is something unknown in this locality to the "oldest inhabitant."

It is a very difficult matter to make an exact estimate of the yield of the different crops, as they are yet unharvested, but after a careful examination I feel warranted in making the following statement as to the probable yield:

75 acres of wheat, 15 bushels to the acre, 1,125 bushels.

45 acres of oats, 30 bushels to the acre, 1,350 bushels.

23 acres of peas, 30 bushels to the acre, 690 bushels.

45 acres of potatoes, 50 bushels to the acre, 2,250 bushels.

60 acres of timothy, 1½ tons to the acre, 90 tons.

7 acres of vegetables, 3 tons to the acre, 21 tons.

Most of the farming implements belonging to this farm have been in use for several years, (in fact ever since the farm was located at this place, some five years ago,) and are almost entirely worn out and useless, especially the ploughs and wagons. It will be absolutely necessary to have a new supply of these and other articles to carry on farming properly another year.

The supply of goods furnished for the use of the Indians is entirely exhausted. This is owing to the fact (as I am informed by the late agent of this place, that during the year 1866 there was no clothing furnished for this reservation at all. When I first took charge of the Indians here, I found nearly all of them almost entirely naked; in fact, the only clothing they had was such as they had begged from settlers in the neighborhood, or manufactured themselves; consequently the issue of clothing has been unusually large, and has exhausted the supply furnished. It was the custom of former agents to allow some of the best working Indians the privilege of working for settlers in the vicinity of this farm, but as this is our busiest season, and harvest is approaching, I am compelled to keep them all at home and not permit them to work for others.

As a general thing they all enjoy pretty good health, owing in a great measure to the skilful treatment of the resident physician, and the kind attention of the other employés.

In connection with the above, I would most respectfully urge the propriety or necessity of purchasing this valley, or at least a portion of it, by the government, for a permanent home for the Indians here and others that may come hereafter. I am convinced that the whole valley can be bought at a very reasonable price. It is very necessary that there should be some improvements made soon, such as an hospital and a school-house, and other things that I could mention; but so long as it is uncertain whether the Indians will remain here permanently or not I don't feel like taking the responsibility of making such improvements as are actually necessary for the benefit of the Indians.

Trusting that the above may meet your approbation, I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY ORMAN, Jr.,

Indian Agent, Smith River Indian Farm, California.

Hon. B. C. WHITING,

Superintendent Indian Affairs, California.
