

No. 164.

OFFICE OF THE MENDOCINO INDIAN RESERVATION,
August 15, 1857.

SIR: Herewith I have the honor to submit, in accordance with instructions from the department, my annual report as to the number, condition, means of subsistence, and occupation of the Indians now on the Mendocino reservation.

Number.

Since my last annual report was made there have been removed to this reserve three thousand and seventy-five Indians. Of this number one thousand one hundred and forty-four are adult males, one thousand and sixty-seven adult females, and eight hundred and sixty-four children; these, together with those previously here, make a total of three thousand four hundred and fifty now under my care.

Some few of those brought here by the government have returned to their old homes without permission; still the great majority of them remain, apparently well contented. They begin to understand and feel that it is better to be here, where they are well cared for and protected, rather than be exposed to the insults and oppressions which are at all times liable to be heaped upon them by unprincipled whites when beyond the immediate vicinity of some Indian agency.

About fifteen hundred of the Indians are now absent, permission having been given to those that wish to visit their former haunts so to do, and to others the privilege of going into the numerous small uninhabited valleys situated from fifteen to twenty-five miles from this place.

I give them this liberty that they may for a short time be freed from any restraint imposed by the presence of whites, and also that they may gather the seeds of the various grasses that cover the whole country at this season. These seeds, added to their other means of subsistence, will materially aid in supporting them during the severe months of the year.

Crops.

The crop put in during the year consists of seventy-five acres of wheat, one hundred and fifteen acres of oats, sixteen acres of barley, ten acres of peas, one hundred and thirty acres of potatoes, and ten acres of turnips.

Although they may yield a fair per centage on the investment of seed, stock, and other capital, still, owing to the severe and unusual drought of the past season, the result will not prove as profitable as could be wished, and which there was every reason to expect, considering the pains taken to insure a good return.

Fishery.

The result of the fishery is satisfactory. About thirty thousand pounds of rock and right cod have been caught; of this amount

twenty thousand pounds have been salted and dried, making some eight thousand pounds to be reserved for winter use. There have been also caught some ten thousand pounds of small fish, such as smelt, sardines, perch, &c., which, together with the large fish not dried, have been issued to the employés and Indians for daily consumption.

The season for the running of salmon and herring now approaches, and, as I am supplied with conveniences, I intend to salt and smoke such quantities as may be practicable.

The business of fishing is carried on entirely by Indians, aided by two white men. The Indians are now so well advanced in the use of the boats and seines, that I intend at the end of this month to dispense with the services of one of the white men, leaving one to oversee and look after the property.

On the beach near the Ten Mile river the Indians catch a large number of small fish, similar to the sardine of commerce. They catch them in their own rude way, by running into the surf, planting hand nets, which, being lifted at the return of each roller, are found to contain from one to a dozen; so that in the course of a day a man can take probably half a bushel. These fish, after being dried, furnish one of the most palatable and nutritious articles of food they have.

Muscles.

Muscles of an excellent quality and in almost inexhaustible quantities can be gathered along the whole coast bordering the reservation. During the winter season, however, at the time they are most needed, there are periods of from one to ten days when it is almost impossible to get at them, on account of the severe storms which rage during that portion of the year. Although a very nourishing article of food, still I am inclined to think that, in making out the ration list, too much stress ought not to be laid on that fact, as it is well known that the continued use of any one article of food not only satiates, but eventually seriously injures the health.

Hunting.

The system of supplying the reserve with fresh meat by hunting, I think, owing to various causes, had better be abolished. Accordingly, during this quarter I shall discharge those white men now engaged for that purpose. The country has settled up so rapidly that the game has all been driven to some distance, and even when found it is so wild that it is with great difficulty it can be shot. Then, again, considering that the wear and tear of horses and saddles, and the amount of provisions, ammunition, &c., used up in procuring the game is so large, I think that the government could be supplied with more regularity and at a much less expense by purchasing small bands of beef cattle in such quantities and at such times as might be required.

Number of buildings.

There are now on this reserve eleven frame buildings, and one of logs, besides one large building for a hospital, and twenty-five comfortable houses built for Indians.

Number of acres enclosed.

There are about five hundred and thirty acres enclosed by good substantial fences; in making which there were used thirty-three thousand rails, besides which there are some six thousand rails not yet used. All these rails were made through all the various processes of cutting, sawing, and splitting, by the labor of Indians, they only having the supervision of white men.

Land ploughed.

There have been about one hundred and sixty acres of land ploughed and prepared for the next planting, besides that already enumerated as being under cultivation.

Amount of stock.

In the improvement of this land I have had in constant use six head of horses, two mules, and forty-four oxen. Although the amount of land cultivated appears small in comparison with the expenditure, still, on examination, two reasons suggest themselves why it is so.

In the first place, it is necessary to sustain the stock entirely by grazing, which materially diminishes the working hours, and renders the cattle less able to perform the labor they ought. In the next place, the land being new, it is requisite to use five yoke of cattle to each plough, and even then it is a good day's work for a team to break up one acre.

For the first difficulty I see no remedy at the present time, nor will there be any until it becomes practicable to cultivate sufficient land, in addition to that required for the support of the Indians, to furnish oats and hay for the work animals. The second cause of complaint will scarcely exist another year. After the land has been once turned over, one yoke of oxen will easily do the labor now performed with great difficulty by five or six yoke.

Occupation.

As to the occupation of the Indians, it will be perceived by this report that the labor of the place is mostly performed by them. I find it necessary as yet, however, to employ white men to oversee and direct them; also to have a white man for a carpenter, and one for a blacksmith. On the discharge of one of the white men from the fishery, I shall advance an Indian to the command of the schooner

which is used in carrying the government freight to and from Mendocino. The vessel will then be entirely manned by Indians, who are fully competent to the charge.

The blacksmith, also, has an assistant, who has evidenced a capability of improvement that shows Indians can be trained to fill all the ordinary mechanical offices of the reserve.

There are a number of good teamsters, ploughmen, farm hands, wood choppers, and, indeed, men to fill all the various duties requisite on a farm, and for some of which I find occupation as they are severally qualified. The women I find useful in the harvest field and in making clothing; all that used by the Indians, with the exception of a few things for the boatmen, having been made entirely by them.

Necessity of education.

Although at this early stage of the reserve it can scarcely be expected that much attention should be paid to the education of Indian children, still the large number of youth of both sexes that I see growing up in idleness, and for whom I cannot as yet find any useful occupation, admonishes me that at least an effort ought to be made to gather them into schools and to train them, so that, as they advance in years, they may advance in usefulness.

I have caused to be prepared, by two different captains of tribes, pieces of ground, containing some two acres each, and of which they have had the sole care and charge, doing all the labor according to their own judgment, from the planting to the present time. The result is highly satisfactory, and shows that whatever can be introduced to increase their comfort and give variety to their occupations, tends to make them more contented, and bind them more securely to their new homes.

Physician.

The employment of a physician and the establishment of a hospital I have found to operate greatly to the benefit of the Indians. By reference to the physician's report annexed, it will be seen that he has treated, during the past quarter, one hundred and thirty-three patients, the great majority of whom have, under his care and attention, been restored to health. He has also, during the same time, vaccinated eight hundred and forty two persons. The general health of the reservation is excellent. The diseases mostly prevalent are those brought on by the imprudence of the Indians themselves, and by promiscuous connexion with the whites, which shows, if more proof were needed, the propriety of removing them to this and other reservations.

Roads.

I have, during the past year, built two roads—one from headquarters to Little Valley station, by the way of Bald Hill station, and one from the Noyeau river to Mendocino, the shipping port of the county. The first one is about eight miles in length, over the whole extent of which a team can haul a full load without any difficulty whatever. The second is ten miles long, and, by the alteration of the grades,

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which, by a mistake of the overseer, were left too steep in some places, can be made equally as good.

Stations.

At the different stations of Bald Hill, Yokia, and Ten Mile river, although but recently established, everything is progressing as well as could be expected or wished. In the course of another year they will prove valuable aids in carrying out and perfecting the system adopted for the government of this reserve.

Military post.

During the past year there has been a detachment of United States troops posted on the reservation for the better security of employés and the preservation of government property. I have not as yet had occasion to call upon them, and hope the time is far distant when any necessity for so doing shall arise.

The condition of the Indians now on this reserve affords abundant cause for congratulation, and furnishes another evidence of the propriety and wisdom of the system of Indian reservations.

Condition.

Fortunately, the character of the several tribes embraced under the jurisdiction of this reserve, although coming from widely separated portions of the country, assimilates so nearly that the means employed to advance the condition of one tends to improve all the others.

I am happy to be able to state that not only are the Indians within the immediate limit of the reservation peaceable and quiet, but so, also, are all those residing without and adjacent thereto.

Submitting the above for your favorable consideration, I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

H. L. FORD, *Sub-Agent.*

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