

No. 105.

OFFICE FRESNO INDIAN AGENCY,
California, August 18, 1858.

SIR: Pursuant to the regulations of the Indian department, I have the honor to submit this my annual report for the year 1858.

There are within the bounds of this agency, that I am personally acquainted and familiar with, twenty-three distinct tribes of Indians that have voluntarily reported themselves, and asked to be recognized and treated as belonging to the agency, numbering in the aggregate two thousand five hundred and fifty-five Indians, of which number there may be estimated as male adults, one thousand one hundred and fifty five; women, one thousand; and children, large and small, one thousand and five. In addition to which number there has been an increase to the number of Monos, heretofore reported, of some six hundred, making a sum total of three thousand one hundred and fifty-five Indians known to belong to this agency.

The entire twenty-three tribes, above enumerated, though not stationary on the farms may be considered as concentrated, and to some extent dependent on the farms.

The services of any portion of their number may be relied on when called for to labor, none failing to visit the farms for counsel, clothing &c., at least once during each quarter. These Indians are well disposed and obedient to white men, kind and charitable towards each other, and, if the results of past experience can be relied on as a criterion, it would seem, from the practical workings of a concentration of from three to five hundred on this farm during the last nine months' working season, that association and proper management was only necessary to unite them as one harmonious family, easy trained to such pursuits as would lead to their early happiness and prosperity, and though the rising generation yet seem to retain a liberal share of the rude wildness of their ancestors, I have been much disappointed in their ability to acquire a knowledge of civilized life.

The almost universal obedience to, and respect for the instructions of the agent and assistants, and their aptness to acquire the use of tools, is favorable evidence that it is only necessary to give them a chance under proper tuition, and they will soon become a thriving people.

The Mono Indians, who reside some two ridges higher up in the mountains than the Foothill Indians, like the Atlantic Indians of former days, are of different features, and seem by nature to be a more rational and calculating people. They as yet have had but little intercourse with the whites, and are, to a considerable extent, still exercising and practicing many of the rude and savage customs of their ancestors.

They have more recently made frequent visits to the farms for counsel and presents, never failing to tender their service to labor. They are generally industrious, and have the reputation of being honest, embracing all opportunities that offer to obtain labor from the few white men that reside in their neighborhood, and occasionally mine, and until the spontaneous produce of the hills are diminished by the

occupation of their soil and territory by the white man, they can, as they have for generations past, subsist themselves without suffering. The necessities of these people for the present only require a small issue of clothing and occasional counsel. Yet on the more permanent concentration of the Foothill Indians on the farms or elsewhere, which must be done before there is a move made to concentrate the Monos on a reservation, they will be subject to the same bad example and evil influences that have already proved so ruinous to the Foothill Indians.

The entire Indian population belonging to this agency, except the Kings River Indians, who are subject to chills and fever during the fall and forepart of the winter season, have, taking them as a body of people, during the last season enjoyed excellent health. The odious disease syphilis, which has long been the main destroyer of their health and numbers, seems, by a little medical aid, change in the habits of life and living of the rising generation, to be fast declining.

The work animals belonging to this agency are, by the course of nature and a series of years hard labor, found to be much on the decline, otherwise in fine condition for business. The wagons are worn out, and unfit for other than temporary use about the farm.

The wheat raised on the two farms is estimated at sixty-seven thousand two hundred and seventy pounds, and the barley at thirty-seven thousand four hundred and fifty pounds, in addition to which there has been raised on this farm a fair variety of vegetables in abundance, and on the two farms twenty acres of corn, which gave a fair yield.

It is believed, by judicious management aided by seemingly a good mast, that the wheat and corn raised on the two farms can be made to suffice for Indian breadstuffs during the fall and winter season of the ensuing year.

Nine months faithful labor having recently terminated with the finishing of harvest, the Indians, except some two hundred that know no other home but the farms, have, by permission, gone on their way rejoicing into the mountains to take their annual "Mansanito Feast," where they will remain until salmon season, at which time a large majority of them will anxiously repair to the San Joaquin river, there to remain until called for to commence the labors of another year, and the remainder to go into the mountains for the purpose of gathering for the winter "acorns" and such other spontaneous means of subsistence as the seasons may afford. Thus enjoying at this degenerate age of this fated people, a "pasear," and feast of some three months in the year, such as Providence, before the occupation of their territory by the white men, secured to their perpetual and unmolested possession.

The natural resources on which those people of the "foot hills" have subsisted for generations past, except the "acorns," has been and will continue to be destroyed or consumed by the stock of the white man and otherwise, never again to return in kind to supply their wants; yet, could the first impression made on the minds of those people by the example of the whites be as universally moral, consistent, and useful to them as it is immoral, inconsistent, and injurious, their chances for useful knowledge and a plentiful supply of subsistence, by laboring in the mines, and for the whites, would more

than equal the inconvenience caused by the destruction of the wild game and seeds; and notwithstanding the relative and social position of the white man and Indian, morally speaking, is by no means commendable, the Indian population is to be found promiscuously scattered over the agency, more or less associated and interested with the whites, and I am fully authorized to say all classes are enjoying as great a degree of peace and security for person and property as can be boasted of in any new country.

Now that the destinies of these fated people over whose interest I have the honor to preside have probably, owing to the misfortunes resulting from a succession of dry seasons, become a matter of speculation in the minds of those responsible for their welfare, the all-important question arises, what is best for, and what should be done with them? On this subject I content myself with a few suggestions for the consideration of the department, the applicability of which must be entirely dependent on the policy hereafter pursued by the government.

Should the government have determined on moving these people from this section of country—ample provision having been made for the emergency—would it not be the better policy to establish this place as headquarters during the operation? Two years' time, if not more, will be required for its consummation, during which time some place for concentration and employment is indispensable to success.

Independent of the water that might fall from the elements above for the next few years, advantageous as this place is with the preparations already made for irrigation, but little more labor or expense would be required as a guarantee that there might be more grain raised here for less money than elsewhere in this section of country—thus avoiding the expense and confusion resulting from a temporary move among both Indians and stock; and although I would not rely on the rains that might fall—should it be the will of Providence to send them forth, as has been the case heretofore—there might be sufficient grain raised on this farm for all the Indians. As to the plan of a move, it occurs to my mind that the better policy would be, first to take a sufficient number of intelligent and influential Indians and a sufficient number of animals to put in and cultivate a crop the coming season on the lands designed for their future homes; which party, if satisfied with their new homes and prospects, would influence a large number of the Foothill Indians to move off cheerfully next fall, thereby giving place to the Monos, who would, by inclination and a little encouragement, concentrate on the farms and follow the ensuing season—thus accomplishing the desired object sought by the government in a conciliatory manner, without the aid of a military force.

However unimportant it may be, I am fully aware of the feelings and determination of those people on this subject. I ascertain it by suggesting to them in a politic way the propriety of looking out for and moving to a better country, which matter the principal chiefs took under consideration for two weeks during "feast time," and replied by inquiring of me "if it would not be better to move the white people to a better country and leave them in their own country,

where they know how to make a living, and would do it without expense to the government?"

Should the government determine otherwise than to make preparation for a move, I would then suggest that this farm be leased for a term of years, and stocked with cattle and a few breeding mares. There is no better place for stock raising; consequently it would seem to be a great loss that there could not be some stock growing where there is so much used and consumed, where and when the keeping would cost nothing.

That there be also more extensive preparation made for irrigating the farm, which would cost but little other than Indian labor. Irrigation properly applied is sure; yet, irrigating land after the water is controlled and ready for application is, contrary to the expectations of all ever experienced, an immense labor, but is just the work Indians can do. No place within my knowledge in California has greater facility for irrigation than this during the wheat, barley, and corn growing season of the year.

Past experience has proved that the probable necessary expense required in carrying on the operation of this agency during the present fiscal year—observing the strictest economy in attaining the ends sought by the general government in civilizing and ameliorating the condition of the Indians within its bounds, keeping up one farm—cannot fall much short of \$7,000 per quarter; and if found politic to keep up two farms, an additional amount of not less than \$1,000 per quarter will be required.

All of which is very respectfully submitted by

Your most obedient servant,

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