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No. 106.

TEJON AGENCY, CALIFORNIA, *August 20, 1858.*

SIR: In compliance with the regulations of the Indian bureau I have the honor to submit this my annual report.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the smiles of Providence on my endeavors to advance the interests and ameliorate the condition of the Indians under my charge, as manifest in their steady and gradual improvement in their habits and knowledge of the arts of civilized life. It is with pleasure, too, that I refer to the happiness and contentment they have manifested during the past year, and their desire to improve their own condition, to cultivate the lands allotted to them, and build substantial and comfortable houses for their families. Their improvement is apparent to the most casual observer; nearly every male adult owns one or more houses, and several families have milch cows, poultry, and other things that tend to make a good living and

a comfortable home. The women have been taught to make all the clothing given to the Indians, which supersedes the necessity and expense heretofore incurred of buying ready made clothes.

There have been, however, a few instances to mar the general quiet of their existence, but every case of this kind is easily traced to the use of ardent spirits, obtained of evil disposed persons located in the vicinity of Fort Tejon, who have so managed their despicable traffic as to render prosecution for the offence almost futile.

Notwithstanding the general prosperity of the Indians and their advanced condition, yet a most serious drawback has been experienced to their future welfare, and that of the reservation, by the partial failure of the crops.

During the past season I made every effort to produce a good crop of grain and general produce—such an one as should re-establish the former good reputation of Tejon in an agricultural point of view. How far I have succeeded in this the following statement will show.

The past two years the grain was grown on land which had been cultivated ever since the reserve has been established, and proved a comparative failure. I therefore selected for the present crop fresh soil, and nearer the source of water for irrigation, thus increasing the favorable chances for a good return.

This land I had carefully seeded and irrigated, and, from the appearance of everthing, I was satisfied that a good yield would be certain, but to my surprise I found, when the crop was nearly matured, that almost every acre of the wheat was badly smutted, and what little was not thus affected fell far short of a good crop. To test fully the adaptation of the soil for wheat raising I procured first quality seed, and to avoid any known cause of smut, sowed it at least one mile from the field in which the grain was cultivated and smutted in previous years, and the result was as stated. Sufficient, however, has been produced, with what wild food the Indians can gather, to keep them in a state of comparative comfort, by strict economy, during the approaching winter. The continuous drought of this region, however, is lessening every year the natural resources of the Indians—those upon which they chiefly subsisted before the aid of government was extended to them. It also renders fruitless all efforts to obtain from the soil even a fair average crop by cultivation. For the past three years efforts have been made to attain this end, but without that success which well directed labor and diligence generally command.

This failure cannot be attributed to the manner in which the land has been cultivated, for the most approved method has been put in practice, but entirely to the drought. Were any of the farmers in the vicinity more fortunate in agriculture I would still entertain the hope that good crops might be raised here in dry seasons, but such is not the case. The failure of crops has not been confined to Tejon, but it is, and has been universal throughout the southern portion of the State.

I have carefully observed from year to year the effects of this long continued drought upon this section of country, and have reluctantly reached the conclusion that it is impracticable, if not impossible, to raise good crops of wheat and corn on this reserve, except in very wet

and favorable seasons, a thing which has not occurred since 1853, and from past experience cannot be relied upon. The rains for the period mentioned have not been sufficient to mature the crops, nor has the small mountain stream, upon which we entirely depend, afforded enough water for irrigation. In justice to the Indians I deem it my duty to suggest, for the consideration of the department, the propriety of selecting a more suitable point for agricultural purposes, to which these Indians could be removed.

For the past few months I have had one of the employés of the reservation in charge of the Tule river station, at which place there are about two hundred Indians, who have been furnished with the necessary agricultural implements for cultivating a small crop. He reports a very flattering condition of affairs, and that the Indians are healthy and contented. I have taken the initiatory steps to build a suitable house for the occupancy of the person in charge, which will be built principally by Indian labor. A delegation of Indians from the region of Owen's lake, east of the Sierra Nevada, visited the reservation a short time since. The people of that region, so far as I can learn, number about fifteen hundred. The delegation asked assistance to put in crops next season, also some one to instruct them in agriculture, &c. I would respectfully invite your attention to the subject, as they appear to be very sincere in their solicitations. I gave them presents of clothing and useful implements, and sent them back to their people, with the promise of submitting their request to the great chief.

There are now living on Tejon about six hundred and fifty Indians, men, women, and children; and outside of the reserve, but within the agency and under my supervision, and who recognize this reserve as their home, and who obtain their subsistence and clothing therefrom, about eight hundred; making in all fourteen hundred and fifty Indians within this agency. The general health of the Indians is good—at least so far as its condition is influenced by any malarious properties of the locality—the most of the suffering arising from improper associations and excesses.

From present indications the crops of bijote, watah, pinoues, and grass seeds will be abundant, and will be gathered in large quantities. The Indians are being sent off in small parties, well provided with the necessary implements and animals to secure an ample supply of this species of wild food. From information that I consider reliable, much suffering may be expected among the Indians from Owens' lake, and south along the Sierra Nevada, embracing those on the Nohave. During the summer Indians have visited the agency from these points, and they all entertained fears of a famine. They have gathered little or no wild food, from the fact that there is scarcely any to be obtained, their country being so thoroughly dried up. In this vicinity, however, the acorn crop will doubtless be large, and it is to be hoped that a similar yield will be obtained by those who require it so much.

The number of employés on the reserve at present, is not sufficient to effectually enforce that strict discipline and control which is so essential to the proper government of Indians collected upon reservations. I think it important and absolutely necessary that, so long as a

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reservation is kept up, an adequate force should always be employed, not only to manage its farming operations, but in cases of emergency, such as sudden outbreaks among the Indians which past experience has taught us to expect and provide against, to protect our lives and the government property from destruction. I therefore consider it my duty to recommend a small increase to the present force. In this connexion I would, however, state that, in the discharge of my official duties, I have been faithfully aided and sustained by the cheerful and active co-operation of the employés of the agency under my management.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. R. VINEYARD,  
*Indian Agent.*

Hon. THOMAS J. HENLEY,  
*Superintendent Indian Affairs, San Francisco, California.*

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