
No. 23.

TULE RIVER RESERVATION, CALIFORNIA,
August 20, 1868.

SIR: I have the honor herewith to transmit this my first annual report of the condition of the Indian service at this agency, from the 1st day of October, 1867, at which time I assumed the duties of agent, to the above date.

Upon entering on the discharge of my duties I found the condition of the service at the agency very unsatisfactory. This was not so much owing to the management of the former agent as to the unwise policy of endeavoring to conduct and manage an Indian reservation on private lands rented from individuals from year to year. This policy prevents permanent improvements, retards progress in improving the condition of the Indians, and has the effect to keep them discontented and unwilling to engage in the various kinds of labor required for making even the necessary improvements wanted for present use. While they readily engage in labor necessary to cultivate the soil and provide for their subsistence, they are averse to making any improvements, making the excuse that they have no surety that they will enjoy the benefits which would necessarily follow their labors, and that, if government will not provide them lands on which to labor, they are unwilling to labor for others.

The residence of the agent, an old adobe building without floors and unfinished, has been floored, the walls plastered, whitewashed, and made passably comfortable as a residence. An adobe stone house has been built for the storage of Indian goods and supplies; an additional granary, 15 by 28 feet, has been erected for the storage of grain; these improvements have been made during the year, and were such as the service required for immediate use. A large irrigating ditch, five miles in length, taking the water from Tule river, and a wagon road, 25 miles in length, to the pinery in the mountains, were constructed by G. L. Hoffman, former agent, by and with the labor of the Indians, with the expectation that the lands rented would be purchased by the government, and that those enterprises would be of great utility and benefit to the reservation. Should the government purchase the lands now rented they would be of great value.

The Tules mostly have comfortable adobe or frame houses and cultivate small parcels of land for vegetables. The Manachists, a part, have adobe dwellings, and others live in campoodles, made of grasses, straw, &c., and are comfortable for winter quarters; during the summer—"warm weather"—they live in temporary brush dwellings; with a few exceptions, they have not evinced any desire to cultivate any lands on their own account.

The past winter has been unprecedented on account of the quantity of rain fallen and unusually high water in the rivers. It commenced rain-

ing on the 23d of December ultimo and continued, with slight intermissions, until February. No mail communication was had with San Francisco from December 23 until the 14th of February.

Tule river was higher than ever before known by the white inhabitants. The wheat crop on the reservation suffered materially, both on the bottom lands and on the high lands adjacent to the mountains. Notwithstanding this, we have a fair crop of wheat, amply sufficient for the service, an excellent crop of barley and hay, and summer crops sufficient for the wants of the reservation.

Seeding and harvesting the crops are the periods of the year at which a large amount of Indian labor is required. At other times but few are employed, and many go out and find employment from outside parties as opportunities offer. They receive from 50 cents to \$1 per day. They mostly, with some exceptions, buy clothing and groceries with their wages; in the exceptional cases their wages are spent for liquor. Were the title of the land in the government the Indians would be more constantly employed on the reservation in enlarging the area of the tillable land and in making permanent fences and improvements.

The general habits of the Indians on this reservation are far above those outside. They work cheerfully and readily, stealing is rare among them, they are not vicious, and they seem to appreciate kindness and good treatment. No cases of insubordination or disposition to disobey the rules and regulations of the agency have been manifested, with the not very rare exception of drinking too much whiskey. This is a crying evil, and until the government owns the reservation and makes provision for the punishment of white men, devoid of principle, who furnish or sell the Indians liquor on every occasion, this evil will not, I fear, be lessened. The purchase of the farm now rented has been a subject of consideration by the department and, I believe, of the Committee on Indian Affairs. It is a subject which should be settled at an early day. The interest of the government, as well as the prosperity of the reservation and the welfare of the Indians, require it. The longer the delay the more difficult and expensive will it be to find and secure a proper location, should a removal of the Indians be made. I am satisfied that at the present time the expense attending the selection of a new location and the removal of the Indians would far exceed the amount required for the purchase of the farm. I am aware that there is questionable propriety in the government purchasing lands for Indian reservations while there is so large extent of public domain; but here in southern California the public domain, such as is valuable for agricultural purposes, is covered by Mexican grants or has passed into the ownership of private individuals, and hence the difficulty, at this late day, in finding government lands not occupied or claimed by individuals, suitable and proper for a reservation.

The farm rented contains 1,280 acres, one-third of which is or could be made tillable, suitable for agricultural purposes. The buildings, aside from the Indian houses, are the agent's residence, an adobe building, one story, 45 by 36 feet, partially finished; an adobe stone house, 12 by 18 feet; one frame granary 14 by 50 feet; one ditto, 15 by 28 feet; blacksmith shop, employé residence, and Barby house, all adobe buildings; one hay shed, 40 by 60 feet.

The land not suitable for tillage is well adapted for grazing purposes. An orchard of peach trees and fig trees, all in bearing, producing fruit sufficient for the wants of the reservation, a vineyard of 1,000 vines producing abundance of grapes. These could be enlarged to any extent; government land adjacent to the farm enclosed, 800 acres, partly in cultivation, which amount of tillable land could be very considerably enlarged.

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A school of 25 scholars—females—was commenced by the agent's wife in November last, and continued to May 22. It was discontinued on account of illness of teacher. The attendance of the Indian girls was quite regular and their improvement encouraging and satisfactory. It is intended to continue the school on and after the 1st of October.

The health, on the reservation, of the Indians has been good, and improved up to the 1st of July, at which time fever-and-ague and fevers prevail for about three months. At the present time there are many cases of the above diseases; and also the measles has broken out on the reservation within the week. The Indians are much alarmed, and, being complicated with other diseases—many chronic cases—it is feared that many cases will prove fatal.

The Coweas, Wechummies, and Four-Creek Indians, numbering some 200, residing in Tulare county, as well as a large number residing in Kern county, would be in a much better situation were they placed on the reservation. They reside within a distance of 50 miles; many of them visit the reservation frequently; but the uncertain tenure of the location has prevented any arrangements for their removal to the reservation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES MALTRY, *Agent.*

Hon. N. G. TAYLOR,

Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City, D. C.