

No. 99.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT INDIAN AFFAIRS,
San Francisco, Cal., August 28, 1854.

SIR: Since entering upon my official duties on the 26th ultimo, in accordance with my instructions of June 2, 1854, I have visited the Indian reservation at Tejon, (the only reservation at which, as yet, any Indians have been collected,) and have taken possession and supervision of the public property, schedules of which will accompany my report at the expiration of the quarter.

I could not ascertain the precise number of Indians belonging to the Tejon reservation, as many of them were in the mountains, upon an excursion which a portion usually take at this season of the year, to collect grass-seeds and berries which they find there in great abundance, and of which they are very fond. I fix the number, however, according to the best information I could obtain, at seven hundred, who acknowledge the authority of seventeen chiefs. These Indians many of them speak the Spanish language, having learned it during their intercourse with the Mexicans, and at the "Catholic Missions," where some of them have been previously employed, and where they acquired some knowledge of agriculture previous to the settlement of California by the people of the United States.

The plan of subsisting the Indians by their own labor in the cultivation of the soil, I presume was suggested by the success which has attended the efforts of the Catholic priests in applying Indian labor to the erection of the mission buildings, and to the cultivation of their vineyards and grounds. The erection of these establishments has been a work of immense labor. I will give a single instance, the mission of San Fernando, which I can but very imperfectly describe. It consists of one building 300 feet in length by 35 in width, two stories high; one church 60 feet square; two houses for Indian residences, each one hundred yards in length. The vineyards and orchards contain probably 100 acres, enclosed by a substantial adobe wall 10 feet high; very extensive fields in the vicinity have been in cultivation, irrigated by water conveyed several miles in ditches. There are some ten or fifteen of these mission establishments in this State, all of which have been mainly erected and sustained by the labor of Indians.

One other experiment of the kind, upon a somewhat large scale, has been successfully tried by Captain Sutter, near Sacramento city, in the construction of a large fort, enclosed by an adobe wall fifteen feet in height, and in the cultivation of extensive fields of wheat and other grains. In addition to this, the American citizens of California, who resided here prior to the discovery of gold, made profitable and easy use of Indian labor in the cultivation of their lands, and in the herding of cattle. In many places they are employed to labor in the mines, and would doubtless be found very useful in that way, were it not for their proneness to contract all the bad and none of the good habits or practices of the whites. From these facts, showing what has been done with Indian labor under very unfavorable circumstances, the demonstration is clear to my mind that the grand features of the plan can, with proper and judicious management, be made partially if not entirely successful. The Indians in the southern and central portions of the State are willing to labor, and many are anxious to avail themselves of the privilege of settling upon the reservations. I do not, therefore, hesitate to give it as my opinion that the plan of removing them to suitable reservations, requiring them to labor, and issuing to them only such articles of food and clothing from time to time as will supply their immediate wants, is the only method that can be adopted calculated to do permanent good to the Indians in California. To distribute to them beef, blankets, or clothing, in their present locations, would result in more injury than benefit in causing them to become

indolent, and to cease effort to provide the necessary support for themselves. To remove them beyond the limits of the State, or into the high mountain region, without providing for their support, would be worse and more cruel than immediate extermination. The Indians upon the west, unlike those east of the Rocky mountains, have never lived by the chase. Their support has been chiefly derived from the fish of our numerous streams, the acorns and grass-seeds of our valleys, and the roots and berries of the mountains. By the encroachment of the white man they have been driven from their habitations, and their means of living entirely cut off. There seems then to be no alternative which humanity would sanction but to provide them with the necessary tools and implements, and suitable instruction to enable them to obtain a support by their own labor on your lands reserved for that purpose.

The reservation at the Tejon, considering its interior location, difficulty of access, and the delays and trouble which always attend new enterprises, has probably been conducted with considerable energy, and so far as I could judge, the labor has been well performed. The wheat crop is a good one, and may be considered as entirely successful. The barley, having been sown late, was not a full crop. The corn suffered from drought, was not irrigated, and was also deficient in quantity. The raising of vegetables has been almost entirely neglected. The land now in cultivation, about fifteen hundred acres, is enclosed by a ditch; but it is not adequate to the protection of the crop, and some portion of it has this year been destroyed by the stock. There are upon the reservation one old adobe building used as a residence for the persons employed upon the farm, and one new adobe intended for the residence of the superintendent. There are also a sufficient number of corrals for taking care of the stock.

The Indians are not as yet provided with any houses, and are living mostly in such habitations as they are accustomed to in their wild state. The improvements which I consider necessary, and which I contemplate making this fall and winter, and during the early part of the ensuing year, are adobe houses for a granary, workshops, stables, &c, 100 feet in length by 24 feet in breadth, two stories high, (which it is intended hereafter to enlarge by the erection of wings,) a mill, to run by water, for the manufacture of flour, and early in the summer it is intended to erect adobe houses for Indian residences, which can be done at no expense whatever except their own labor.

The Indians, on my arrival at the reservation, were quite anxious to learn if any change had taken place in the intention of the government towards them; and, on assembling in council, it appeared that they had decided objection to the Indian interpreter, and also to the two men in whose charge they had been placed by my predecessor. This objection being removed, I met with no other difficulty; and after several conversations, I left them well satisfied and contented, with an unqualified promise to obey all the orders of those in whose charge I left them. The chiefs, at their own request, have been permitted to exercise police authority over their respective tribes, and are held responsible for the proper quota of labor from each tribe. The labor is divided among the chiefs, according to the number in each tribe: the

making of adobes to one, laying them in the building to a second, threshing wheat, &c., to a third, hauling grain from the field to a fourth, &c., &c. In this way the work progresses in perfect order, and all seem pleased at their participation in it.

The location of the reservation is, in my judgment, a good one—the best that could have been made. The soil is good, and well adapted to the cultivation of such products as are necessary for Indian subsistence. There is an abundance of oak timber at a convenient distance, and plenty of red-wood and pine in the mountains, at accessible points within fifteen miles. The lake within the limits of the reservation affords an abundant supply of fish of a good quality. Game is plenty, and a hunter, at ordinary wages, will furnish meat as cheaply as the beef that is now issued to the Indians. It is remote from the present settlements of our citizens, and will not, I think, for a long time to come, be a barrier even to the progressive and laudable spirit of our people in the settlement of new and remote portions of our Territory.

If the Indians are to be allowed any resting-place within the limits of the State, no attention, in my opinion, ought to be given to any clamor that might be raised against this location, as tending to embarrass the settlement and prosperity of the State.

On returning to San Francisco, I took the emigrant road, via Kern river, Tulare run, King's river, Four creeks, and Fort Miller, and the northern tributaries of the San Joaquin river, a distance of four hundred miles, for the purpose of seeing and conversing with the Indians in that region of the State. The following is a brief statement of their numbers, condition, and disposition in regard to removal, with such remarks as I have considered appropriate.

Kern River Indians number about 100, reside within forty miles of the reservation, and can be removed there at any time.

Posa Creek number 50; ten miles distant from Kern river; can also be removed whenever it may be deemed advisable. These two tribes being at peace with the whites, and having the means of obtaining support in their present home, their removal is not, at this time, a matter of necessity.

Tulare River number 300—subsist upon fish, acorns, and grass-seeds. They are not suffering; but this country is settling, and they ought to be removed. It can be done in the early part of next year.

Four Creeks, the Y-Mitches, and Cowiahs, number 500. Their present location interferes with the progressive settlement of the country, and they should be removed with sufficient despatch to give place to the enterprising pioneer. Tulare river and Four creeks embrace a large extent of agricultural country of surprising fertility, very desirable for settlement, and cannot continue much longer the home of these people.

King River, the Waches, Notoowthas, Ptolmes, and Chunemmes, number 1,000. They subsist upon fish, grass-seeds, and acorns, and some of them obtain grain for their labor, and by gleaning the fields of the settlers. They are unwilling to remove, and are dissuaded from doing so by the white people residing upon this river. So long as they remain peaceable, and do not become demoralized by the vices of the whites, their removal may be postponed.

The San Joaquin Indians, five different tribes—Costrowers, Pitiaches, Talluches, Loomnears, Amonces—number 400, all of which, except the last-mentioned tribe, are in a most miserable and degraded condition. They reside in the mining region, and from an exposure of some four years to its influences, they are reduced to a condition of utter destitution, and to confirmed habits of idleness and dissipation, readily yielding to vices the most degrading and revolting, resulting in disease, which is gradually reducing their numbers. Their condition is too much demoralized, and disease too prevalent among them, to make their removal to Tejon, at this time, either expedient or proper. They require immediate attention and assistance, and will shortly be the subject of a special communication.

The Fresno River Indians are composed of five tribes—the Chowclas, Cookchaneys, Phonecha, Nookchue, and Howetser—and number 500. They are peaceable, quiet, and industrious, are making a good living, and wear clothes. Some of their chiefs and young men will go to the reservation this fall. They are contented where they are, but can easily be prevailed upon to remove.

The above-named tribes, numbering about three thousand souls, reside at an average distance of two hundred miles from the Tejon reservation. Their removal will not be expensive, and can be accomplished as speedily as the advances of the settlements, the interests of the government, or humanity to the Indians, will require.

The crops which will be planted this winter will in all probability be abundant for the support of those referred to, and all the other tribes within reach of the reservation; and in the course of next year a large number may easily be added to those now enjoying the benefits of the reservation.

To colonize the Indians in California, according to the plan now in progress, is a task which will require time, energetic and assiduous industry, and prudent and judicious management; without which, more than partial success need not be anticipated.

In speaking of the Indians between the reservation and the San Joaquin, my remarks are adapted to the policy of peaceable removal, without any attempt at coercion; but there are others with whom it may be necessary to adopt a very different policy—I refer to the tribes residing in the Sierra Nevada mountains, and in the valleys upon their eastern base, embracing the entire range from the Colorado to Oregon. They number several thousand, are hostile to the whites, and most of them are horse-thieves. Time and circumstances can alone determine the policy which should control our action towards them. From the San Joaquin northward to the Klamath there are some hundreds of small tribes, numbering several thousand souls, interwoven with the white people, and, as a general thing, are in a most miserable, degraded, and destitute condition. Disease, starvation, and death, in their most appalling forms, are to be witnessed in every rancho. Those are the objects which should receive the first attention of the government.

Having placed the Tejon reservation in a condition not to require my personal supervision, it is my intention to devote my entire time, for the remainder of this year, to those the most destitute of all our California Indians. The disposition to be made of them, and the policy

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adopted towards them, will be the subject of a communication by the next mail.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. J. HENLEY,

Superintendent.

Hon. G. W. MANYPENNY,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

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