

466 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

No. 66.

OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS, NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA,
San Francisco, September 1, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 24th July, enclosing a copy of the act of Congress making appropriations for three fourths of the fiscal year of 1862, and for the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1863, together with a proviso asking information from the Secretary of the Interior, and directing me to report my views in relation to the subjects embraced in said proviso, viz: "The expediency of reducing the Indian reservations in California to two in number; the proper place for the same; the probable expense thereof; the propriety of disposing of any of the reservations; the value thereof, and of the property thereon; of the manner and terms of such disposals; and in what manner, in his judgment, the expense of the Indian department in that State can be reduced and its system simplified without injury to the same," &c.

In compliance with your directions I take pleasure, at the earliest opportunity, of reporting to your department my views touching the foregoing interrogatories, viz:

1st. In my opinion it is entirely inexpedient to reduce the number of Indian reservations in California to two in number, except by dispensing with all in the southern district, which I cannot feel authorized to recommend, nor do I think it advisable to do so.

It is a well known fact, established by years of observation in Northern California, that the Indians are far more numerous in the northern than in the southern part of the State, perhaps three, if not four, to one.

It is equally true that the numerous tribes who inhabit the mountain districts have always been hostile to the Indians on the sea-coast and lower valleys, and in consequence of this hostile feeling it is always difficult to collect and retain these opposing tribes upon the same reservations.

My views, therefore, on this subject are, as heretofore recommended, viz: 'To dispose of all the reservations in the northern district except two.

There ought to be two, and only two, instead of four, as heretofore established and occupied at great and unnecessary expense to the department.

This will take off nearly one half the expense of mechanics, doctors, and other employes, and, at least, reduce the expense of necessary farming tools and teams to three-fourths the present amount expended in that behalf.

2d. In my opinion the proper places for the permanent establishment of said reservations would be at *Smith River valley*, in Del Norte county, for one, to be mainly occupied by the Coast Indians, and *Round valley*, in Mendocino county, to be principally occupied by mountain or interior Indians.

It will be seen, on the map, these two reservations would be a distance, by the nearest travelled route from each, of about 250 or 275 miles.

Smith River valley, in the extreme northwest corner of Del Norte county and also the extreme corner of the State, adjoining Oregon, is surrounded by interminable, uninhabitable mountains, and accessible only *via* the coast below, at Crescent City, containing a body of good arable land, amounting in all to some five thousand acres, more than two-thirds of which is in a high state of cultivation, besides as many more acres of good pasture land on each side of Smith river.—(See map which I sent to you last February, and special report accompanying the same.)

The timber for fencing and building purposes, and water for mill and drinking purposes, are unsurpassed in any country, together with one of the best salmon fisheries in the State.

Round valley cannot boast of such fishing facilities; nevertheless many fresh

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water fish are taken in the three branches of Eel river. The timber and water are excellent and of the greatest sufficiency, but not in as great abundance.

This valley contains some 19,000 acres, one-half of which is arable, the remainder good for timber and pasture purposes, and in the greatest abundance.

This valley is also surrounded with high mountains, entirely uninhabitable, and, during the winter months, is only accessible through one or two of the lower passes.

The soil in each of these valleys cannot be surpassed in point of fertility. In Smith River valley most of the arable lands have been purchased and highly improved, and it will cost the government some sixty thousand dollars to purchase the land, but the improvements are all valuable for Indian purposes, and are really worth double the money they can be purchased for.

This is the place I was compelled to occupy after the loss of the Klamath by the flood last winter, and will have, in the course of the next ten days, over two thousand Indians on said proposed purchase for a reservation, and am now compelled to pay a rent of five dollars per acre for all I occupy and cultivate.

In Round valley three-fourths of the same is occupied by white settlers, who have settled and made valuable improvements in said valley, at the instance and by the consent of Colonel Henley, who was then superintendent of Indian affairs of California, and now the settlers are willing to take a fair valuation for their improvements, or take other lands in exchange on the Nome Lackee or Mendocino reservations.

I would recommend payment for said improvements and removal of the settlers as early as possible, as many of them are very annoying to the Indian service.

Each of these reservations should be greatly enlarged for hunting and fishing purposes, especially as the enlargement would embrace no agricultural lands fit for white settlements. Twenty-five thousand acres, as now limited by law for a reservation, are more than sufficient for cultivation, but not one quarter sufficient for hunting grounds, &c.

It is well known that all the valuable lands in California, belonging to the United States, have long since been occupied by white people, and it is utterly impossible to procure suitable locations, with sufficient arable land, timber, water, &c., without purchasing. And I have no knowledge of any location elsewhere in the whole State so well adapted to the Indian service as the two herein named.

Clear Lake, in Lake county, would have been a good selection, but now it would cost the government \$200,000 to procure it. The cost of the improvements in Round valley would be, in cash, some \$40,000 or more.

3d. I would by all means recommend the sale of Nome Lackee, Mendocino, and Klamath reservations, (the latter, however, is nearly worthless.) The former (Nome Lackee) doubtless would be taken in exchange, acre for acre, by the white settlers in Round valley.

The value of Nome Lackee reservation would probably amount to fifty thousand dollars, or more; and Mendocino perhaps forty thousand dollars.

Near each of these reservations there are many white people settled, and were all the Indians removed from them the lands would be eagerly sought for.

The value of the property at Nome Lackee consists mainly of four or five buildings, which, in all, are not worth over \$1,000. There is no fencing or other improvements on the place.

The Mendocino property consists of improvements in fencing and buildings worth, perhaps, \$7,000. The cattle, farming tools, mules, and horses about \$10,000.

In this I make no estimate of the present crop of produce, which will be consumed by the Indians the present year.

As to the manner and terms of disposal, I would suggest that Mendocino be

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advertised, and sold in suitable lots of 40, 80, and 160 acre tracts, suited to its location and the wishes of purchasers.

The Nome Lackee reservation I would suggest be sold in like manner, the purchasers, in each case, to pay one-quarter cash in hand, and the remainder in six, twelve, and eighteen months, with six per cent. interest, provided that a commissioner be appointed to value the improvements of the settlers in Round and Smith River valleys, and that they be permitted to bid at such sales of land, and the valuation of their improvements aforesaid be taken as cash for any purchases they may make.

By pursuing this course I feel sure the expenditure necessary in the Indian service here would be greatly reduced, and I am equally sure that the reservation system, properly managed on proper locations, entirely separated from white settlements by natural barriers, is the cheapest, most simple, and safe for both races, and thereby, in a short time, entirely dispense with the use of military aid or protection.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

GEO. M. HANSON,

Superintendent, Agent N. Dist. California Indians.

Hon. WM. P. DOLE,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington.
