

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR. 755

No. 55.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDING AGENT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

*San Francisco, California, October 10, 1861.*

SIR: In rendering my report to the department for the quarter ending September 30, 1861, I beg respectfully to call your attention to the annual report I had the honor to transmit under date of July 13, 1861.

Since entering upon my duties as superintending agent for this district my efforts have been necessarily confined to a rigid inspection of the affairs of the department, with a view of devising the best means of restoring that order and system in its conduct so necessary to the success of my efforts in advancing the mutual interests of the Indian and government.

The great demand that has been made upon our government of late, consequent upon the existing war, has, no doubt, impeded the efforts of the Commissioner to provide me with the funds necessary to carry on the business of the different reservations. With a full knowledge of these embarrassments, I have avoided incurring any debts on account of the Indian service, and have, as stated, as far as practicable, confined my labors to the reorganization of my district, so that the greatest advantage may arise from an experienced administration of its affairs, so soon as the means to operate are provided. I am confident the department will approve of the course I have pursued as one not only calculated to protect the administration from future embarrassment, but from a further complication of the indebtedness for which the Indian service in California is already responsible.

In this report I am led from the investigations I have made to suggestions which, if adopted by the Commissioner, will tend greatly to facilitate my efforts to advance the interest of the department, and to enforce the law laid down for the government of the Indian territory set apart by the government.

As I have already reported, none of the reservations in this district are located upon public lands. The "Tejon," a place eligibly located for Indian purposes, is the private property of a gentleman residing in Los Angeles. Tuló River farm, a location to which large bands of Indians are warily attached as the home of their nativity, is held by Mr. Thomas Madden, of this city, who has from year to year rented it to the government at no small sacrifice to himself. The Colorado district embraces a large extent of territory, inhabited by numerous bands of wild Indians requiring the careful and constant attention of a supervisor. This district is, perhaps, the most important field of operation within this superintendency, in view of the future interests of this State, as the vast mineral developments in these regions will, ere long, bring the Indians in contact with the whites. This, in connexion with their superior ability as a race to those with whom we have heretofore had to deal, will require the most careful attention and judicious exercise of ability on the part of the agent in charge, that the horrors of war and Indian massacres, of which this coast has, in years past, been the theatre, may be avoided in the future.

The Tejon reservation presents much that is desirable for Indian purposes, and if owned by the government can, I am confident, be made self-sustaining.

I beg most respectfully to call the attention of the Commissioner to the importance of making some permanent arrangement for the continuance of this reservation, as at present great embarrassment is experienced from the want of federal jurisdiction. In connexion with this suggestion, it may not be out of place here to urge upon the department the importance of the "*intercourse act*," as enacted by Congress for the government of Indian territory, being extended to the reservations in this State. I am confident the State of California, through her legislature, can be easily induced to relinquish her jurisdiction over territory

756      REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

set apart for Indian purposes, that their interest and welfare may be advanced. At present there is no law-defending agents and supervisors, in the performance of their duties, against the advancements and encroachments of a class of whites who are always inimical to their interests. The intercourse once extended over the reservations, many of the obstacles which have hindered the successful operation of the system proposed by the government will be removed. I beg to call the attention of the department to this subject, and to be advised of the course I am to pursue with the State authorities, that the efforts of the Commissioner may be effectual in its accomplishment.

I am compelled to report that but little has been done on the reservations since my entering upon the duties of this district, for the reasons already stated; yet all has been done that could, under the circumstances, have been expected. The different supervisors have been diligent in their efforts to keep the Indians contented and happy; and it affords me pleasure to state that they have been so far successful as to insure peace and quiet throughout my superintendency.

I would call the attention of the department to the diseased condition of many of the Indians of the Tulare valley, caused by too free intercourse with debased whites. The importance of medical aid in the premises I trust will be seen; and in this matter I desire instructions from the department.

I shall immediately leave here upon a *tour* of inspection through the entire district under my charge, being more than eight hundred miles in length. I shall, while absent, visit the Owens River country, where it is reported there are fine grazing lands, all of which belong to the government. Here, with the permission of the department, I propose to locate a reservation, and give up *entirely* the system of *renting* farms.

Your obedient servant,

JNO. P. H. WENTWORTH.

*Superintending Agent Southern District of California.*

Hon. WILLIAM P. DOLE,  
*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

---