
FRESNO RIVER, *December 14, 1852.*

SIR: I write from this point in the most confident expectation of my ability to carry out the scheme proposed in my last letter, of making useful our present worthless and troublesome Indian population. Every moment of intercourse directly with the Indians, convinces me more fully that the system of colonization proposed in my letters is of easy practicability; and I hope by this time next year—should my suggestions be adopted—to see the Indians of this region not only quiet and peaceable, but diligently and successfully following agricultural pursuits. I know that this can be done; and all I ask is the co-operation of the government, and a little land. Of the quantity of land I will speak hereafter. For the success of what I propose, I am willing to pledge myself and everything I have in the world. I have talked with the Indians, and shown them the impossibility of resistance against the whites. I have also shown them that in a few years their present precarious means of subsistence will have passed away, and that their very existence depends upon their obedience to the agents of our government. Of this I believe they are convinced, and now the only thing remaining is where to place them.

If you were in this country it would need no explanation from me to convince you of the necessity of settling this important point immediately, and you would see that what I am going to say in the next sentence is no exaggeration of the truth. In one year from this time, there will not be a square mile of agricultural land unsettled to the westward of the Sierra Nevada. Assuming, therefore, the utter impossibility of their removal to the eastward, it becomes imperative on the government to indicate at once that portion of the country in which it is intended they shall have a permanent home. I have chosen for this purpose the tract of land lying between the San Joaquin river and the Fresno. My reasons for doing this are such as would meet your approbation, if you were on the spot; and I hope to be able to explain matters so fully, through the medium of this letter, that you may arrive at the same conclusion.

If you will look at the map of California you will find that, starting from Stockton, and following the great valley of the San Joaquin, the road is crossed by seven rivers, which empty into the San Joaquin. Of these the first, second, and third are navigable for considerable distances from their mouths. They are fine, bold streams, running the year round, and affording abundance of salmon, and, what is more important, an easy means of irrigation for the adjacent lands. The fourth is covered by a Spanish claim. The fifth an inconsiderable stream, the bed of which is totally dry nine months of the year. The sixth, the Fresno, would be called a river nowhere but in California—running

only over a shallow and sandy bed, scarcely ankle-deep, for about two or three months of the year. During the remaining portion it is almost impossible to get water from it, except by digging wells. Crossing this, and passing over a sterile and sandy plain, we arrive again at the San Joaquin, the further side of which, from the point at which it emerges from the mountains to the great bend, is claimed by a Spanish grant. Leaving the San Joaquin, passing over a distance of twenty-six miles of perfectly barren lands, we come to King's river and the "Four Creek" region, the richest land and the most beautiful country upon which the sun ever shone. It is the space between the Fresno and the San Joaquin, only valuable on the banks of the rivers, on which I propose to place, and support by their own labor, every Indian between the Tuolumne and Tejone pass.

You will see from this, that by placing the Indians on this narrow slip, we have them removed from all connexion with the whites, and from all probability of collision, by a distance of nearly twenty miles on each side.

The intervening lands, as I said before, lying between the rivers, being unfit for cultivation, and the bottom lying on the further side of the San Joaquin claimed by a Mexican grant, renders it cut of the power of any one wishing to make a pre-emption settlement, to do so.

At present there is but one settlement on this river, and not more than three unimproved pre-emption claims; whilst the gold to be found in its headwaters, far beyond the point where I intend farming this year with the Indians, is so small and so fine in quality, as not to pay American labor; in fact, there are not twenty-five of our countrymen on the entire river. I therefore, having fully and maturely considered all the circumstances in connexion with the case, ask that this space, taking the centre of the San Joaquin on the one side, the western bank of the Fresno on the other, on the north the summit of the first mountain range, on the south the San Joaquin, be set aside as a government reservation for the support of 25,000 Indians.

If this is not done at the present time, it cannot be accomplished at any future period without the enormous expense of purchasing pre-emption claims from those who will have settled there. No one can imagine the startling rapidity with which this country is being settled. Already, as far as the Merced, there is not an acre of unsettled land; and far beyond this, in the "Four Creek" region, there is already a large and flourishing settlement; and this fact alone is better than all the explanations I could give you of the inferior quality of the land I have selected for this reservation, since every settler passing beyond has left as unworthy his labor the part I have indicated.

You will also observe that I have not made either treaties or Indian reservations, nor do I propose to do so. I ask that this land may be set aside as a government reservation, so that the Indians, holding it by no other title but the will of the government, may at any time be removed, at its pleasure.

I implore you, sir, to use your influence in procuring the accomplishment of this design. If it is not done this winter, it can never be done but at great expense, and possibly not at all.

Is it too much to ask that this small piece of land, fourteen miles in

width, and running back a distance of not over forty, the only valuable part of which for whites is a narrow strip, half a mile wide, on each side of the river bottom, should be set aside from the uncounted thousands of acres of beautiful soil enclosed within the boundaries of this State, and this, too, to be held only by sufferance?

As to the practicability of making them support themselves by their own labor, I have no question of it; but to enable them to do so until the seed which I shall plant this year shall have grown, I shall feed them; but after one crop has been raised I shall leave them under the charge of intelligent men, to complete what I have commenced.

I have nothing to tell you of great councils with the Indians when I go among them. Many of the most influential men are acquaintances of long standing: to these I have talked plainly and practically of that which I think will do them permanent good; and if I have neglected to speak to them of their "Father at Washington," the "Great Spirit," and the "pipe of peace," it is because I believe this time-honored custom "more honored in the breach than in the observance;" a neglect which I believe your own practical good sense and knowledge in Indian matters will lead you to approve.

The only difficulty I have to contend with, is in inducing the Indians to put faith in the good will of the government towards them. This is the result of former promises of agents which remain unfulfilled.

In conclusion, I once more recommend earnestly to your consideration, and beg your co-operation in, this scheme.

I am now on my way to Los Angeles and the Colorado river, and trust that the fatigues and toils of winter travelling, in this inclement season, may be rewarded by a happy result.

Hoping to hear from you at an early day in approval of what I have done,

I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
E. F. BEALE,
Superintendent Indian Affairs.

HON. LUKE LEA,
Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.
