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Reports conditions & prospects
of Indian Tribes
in California.

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Amos Gill

Gov.

Office Supt. Indian Affairs
San Feo, Cal. Aug. 28th 1854.

Hon. Geo. W. Manypenny
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.
Washington City
D. C.

Sir:

Since entering upon my official duties on the 26th ult., in accordance with my Instructions of June 2^d 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, ~~and have been ordered, marked~~

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 grape seeds and berries which they find there in great abundance and of which they are very fond. If in the number, however, according to the best information I could obtain at seven hundred (700) 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 Mission" 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, which 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 ft. in length by 35 in width, two stories high. One Church 60 ft. square. Two houses for Indian residences each one hundred yards in length. The Vineyards & Orchards contain probably 100 acres enclosed by a substantial Adobe wall 10 ft. high. Very extensive fields in the vicinity have been in cultivation irrigated by water conveyed several miles in ditches. There are some 10 or 15 of these Mission establishments in this State, all of which have been mainly erected and sustained by the labor of Indians.

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, work-shops, Stables &c. 100 feet in length, by 24 ft. 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 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 ~~excavation~~ location of the reservation is, in my judgement, 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 clamour 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 River, Kings 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 600 - Reside within 40 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 desirable. Two 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.

Fulare 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 Cowiaks number 500. Their present location interferes with the progressive settlement of the country, and they should be removed with sufficient dispatch to give place to the enterprising pioneer. Fulare 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, Kotoouthas, Holmes and Cheenewas number 600. They subsist upon fish, grass seeds and acorns, and some of

them obtain grain for their labor, and by gleaming 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~~ peaceable, & do not become demoralized by the vices of the whites, their removal may be postponed.

The San Joaquin Indians, five different tribes, Coslowers, Pitiatiches, Tallinches, Loomrears, Amomers, 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 aid; and will shortly be the subject of a special communication.

The Fresno River Indians are composed of five tribes, the Chowelas, Cookchaneys, Phonocha, Nookshue 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 3000 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 Valley upon their eastern base, embracing the entire range from the Colorado to Oregon. They number several thousand 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

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as a general thing, are in a most miserable, de-
graded and destitute condition. Disease, starva-
tion and death in their most appalling forms are
to be witnessed in every ranchero. These 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 dis-
position to be made of them, and the policy
adopted towards them will be the subject of a
communication by the next mail.

I am

Very respectfully

Your obedt. servant

Thos. J. Hendley.

Supt.

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