

California Sup's 1854

Edw^d - J. Deale

Tulare River Dec. 14. 52
and letter of Dec. 23. 52.

Relative to his proposed
plan for improving the
conditions of the Indians
in California - Grants
tract of land selected
by him for a permanent
home for them &c.
Wishes co-operation of
the Sup^r.

Recd - 1 July 1853

J. Cassin

^{Calif}
Fresno River Dec^r 14th 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 that I ask is the cooperation 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, as 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 1st 2nd, and 3rd, 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 4th is covered by a Spanish plain. — The 5th an inconsiderable stream, the bed of which is totally dry nine months of the year.

The 6th The Fresno, would be called a river no where 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 farther 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 20 miles of perfectly barren land, we come to King's river, and the "Fou 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 the Tejon pass.

You will see from this, by placing the Indians on this narrow slip, that we have them removed from all connexion with the whites, and from all probability of collision, by a distance of nearly 20 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 farther side of the San Joaquin claimed by a Mexican grant, renders it out of the power of any one wishing to make a preemption settlement, to do so.

At present there is but one settlement on this river, and not more than three unimproved preemption claims, whilst the gold to be found in its head waters, 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 25 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 ^{mountain} range, on the south, the San Joaquin be set aside as a Gov^t reservation for the sup-

part of 25000 Indians.

If this is not done at the present time, it cannot be accomplished at any future period, without enormous expense of purchasing preemption 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 Mercede, 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 tract 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 anytime, 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 14 miles in width, and running back a distance not over 40., the only valuable part of which for whites, is a narrow strip a half of a mile wide on each side of the river bottom, should be set aside from the uncouneted thousands of acres of beautiful soil, enclosed within the boundaries of this state and this too, to be held only by sufferance?

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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 amongst 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," & "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 cooperation 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

Yours Luke Lea

Very Respectfully
E. J. Beale

Com^d Lu^d Lea
Washington D.C.

B-14

Sept 14th 1848

Mrs. Rice

December 23rd 1852

Sir,

In writing my last letter hurriedly, and under circumstances of great personal discomfort, I neglected in speaking of the proposed reservation, to suggest that it should be made within the bounds named, exclusive of the claim of Captain Haler, who is the only settler within the proposed limits, and who has been at some trouble, in building a house, upon his location. He is the only person with whom the reservation would interfere, and I therefore make the above suggestion.

I have also learned since my last, that the width, of the reservation (if it is made out) will be but twelve, instead of sixteen, miles, at its widest part, becoming much narrower, towards its southern boundary — I have this from one of the United States Surveyors.

It gives me pleasure to state, that I am daily receiving most satisfactory evidence from the Indians, of perfect willingness, and even anxiety to come into the proposed system of farming, and colonization.

The winter here is at present uncommonly severe, but I am sure the measures I am adopting, will prevent the necessity of ^{their} stealing, and consequently of any outbreak, always providing the Indians are left undisturbed by the whites.

Very Respectly

Your Obedt Servt

E. F. Beale

Sup^t Ind^{aff}

Hon Luke Lea

Com^r Ind^{aff}

Washington. D.C.