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Report on the Sanitary
Condition of the Indians
of
Mendocino Reservation

Doctor Linnaw M.D.

October 1st 1860

Fort Bragg
Mendocino Indian Reservation

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J. C. Smith Esq
Superintendent Mendocino Reser.ⁿ

My dear Sir:

In pursuance of our conversation yesterday, I submit a very brief report in relation to the sanitary condition of the Indians on this Reservation. I would say that although holding no position in the Indian Department, the diseases which prevail among these Indians have been made the subject of daily observation with me and I am thus enabled to offer an opinion as to the extent of an evil apparent to all and the means for its alleviation.

Of the entire number of Indians on the Reservation a very large proportion are the victims of venereal and other serious diseases. I hazard no charge of exaggeration in saying, that at least six hundred men, women and children among them, are so afflicted. Venereal affections of an aggravated type are especially rife among them. Even little children, incredible as it may appear, of five to seven years old are the subjects of the worst forms of syphilis not inherited so much as the result

of improper contact. Many of these Indians, of both sexes, are actually rotten with disease of this kind and this in addition to other physical ills to which the human family in common is subject.

It is scarcely necessary to direct your attention to the evils which result from this state of affairs, both to the aborigines and to the Department, these evils are patent and manifold. Whilst numbers sicken and die medically uncared for, many others are thus incapacitated for the performance of that labor necessary to the subsistence of themselves and their families, the Department is thereby involved in much pecuniary outlay for their maintenance whilst idle. Nor should it be forgotten that the effect of these ills are not temporary or of determinate duration, but indefinite, progressing and incalculable. The present generation may under the ban of this pestilence pass prematurely away and apparently leave no sign, but its baleful effects will in the future be severely felt among them in the transmission of disease to the blood of their posterity. Again the morab. of the Indians and the influence of the officers in charge of them is necessarily impaired by this condition of things.

These Indians however low in the human scale, have of course a realizing sense of whatever tends to their physical comfort and welfare and extend or withhold their confidence and obedience accordingly.

They can be happy or miserable and if the latter, it follows by obvious logic, are contented. With them as with white men, discontent, idleness and bad conduct are coincident and convertible terms.

Supposing their animal necessities of food and clothing well provided for and their white protectors yet indiffident or apparently so, to the alleviation of their diseases, they cannot manifest their appreciation of the partial kindness shown by industry and obedience.

As yet no very effective measures have been instituted to stay or cure the spread of disease among these people. A physician, or at least one calling himself such, has been employed, but no adequate hospital or other arrangements have been provided for confining his roaming or erratic "Digger" patients within the reach of his medical care.

Nor have sufficient or adequate measures been put in force to insure the collection and systematic treatment of the diseased. But few are pro-

121
portion to the entire number demanding aid have been benefitted at all, and these only partially so.

It is apparent now that an energetic & competent physician should be employed and allowed such assistance in his arduous labors as the necessities of the case imperatively demands. A sufficient supply of such remedies only, as are absolutely necessary should be provided. The cost of these, including medicines, of which only a limited variety is needed, hospital apparatus, instruments and appliances would probably not exceed \$400. per annum. A small stock of these articles is already on hand. A suitably constructed enclosure should be provided for the accommodation of male patients and a building of somewhat smaller dimensions is needed for the occupancy of the females and children. These structures need only be of the plainest and roughest description compatible with stability. This arrangement would insure the submission of the diseased Indians for a sufficient length of time to the medical efforts instituted for their cure and the separation of the sexes, which cannot now be effected. It is thought, taking in account the structure of

this work already existing, that these structures
could be provided at a trifling cost.

There are of course other and minor details
necessary to the management of these sick
Indians which will readily suggest themselves
and which the necessary brevity of this
Report forbids me to enumerate.

Being assured that the warm interest
you have already manifested in the welfare
of the Indians committed to your charge,
will insure proper attention to this Report.
I remain dear Sir,

Very respectfully
Yours
P. A. Quinn
Apt. Surgeon U.S. Army