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Extract from the report of the Secretary of the Interior relative to the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

In view of the disturbing causes that have existed, our relations with the various Indian tribes are as favorable as could reasonably be expected. The experience of the past few years, however, clearly demonstrates the necessity of important changes in the policy hitherto pursued towards them.

While the regions of country occupied by the Indians remained uninhabited by the whites, the plan of setting apart separate reservations for different bands of the same tribe, or for small tribes possessing similar habits and customs, and privileged to roam over common hunting grounds in quest of the means of subsistence, as in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska, seemed wise and to promise success; but as the country becomes settled, their dependence upon game and the spontaneous productions of the earth becomes more and more precarious, while the necessity for their keeping within the limits of their reservations increases. The Indians are thus left without their accustomed resources, and in the midst of a population with whose customs and arts of life they are wholly unfamiliar. They consequently become discouraged, and, looking solely to their scanty annuities from the government, or to begging and pilfering for the necessaries of life, fall an easy prey to the sharpers and whiskey traders who gather around their reservations for the purpose of obtaining their moneys. The smaller the reservation the greater are the facilities for the exercise of this pernicious influence, and hence the necessity of concentrating scattered bands and the smaller tribes of similar habits, language, and customs, into as large communities as possible, and their location upon the more remote portions of the public domain. They will soon become extinct unless they acquire the arts of civilized life, and to this end it is indispensably necessary to place them beyond the reach of any influence save that of their agents, teachers, and assistants. The vast emigration to the newly discovered gold-bearing regions of the interior has brought us into more immediate contact with large and powerful tribes, with whom no treaties other than those of amity have yet been negotiated, and all the energies which the department can possibly exert in that direction will scarcely be adequate to the pressing demands that will be made upon it during the next few years by the exigencies of the Indian service in those regions. Immediate steps should be taken to prevent collision between them and our own people, to provide suitable locations for the Indians, and to induce them to settle upon them and engage in the cultivation of the soil, and the rearing of domestic animals, and in the mean time to furnish them such supplies as may be absolutely necessary to prevent starvation. The number of Indians under the direct supervision of the department is thus rapidly becoming larger than at any former period, and the wisdom of anticipating this increased demand upon its resources by a corresponding increase in the appropriations for

the Indian service, whether we are to be guided by the principles of justice and humanity, or economy, must be manifest to all.

Particular attention is also invited to the condition of Indian affairs in California. That State has hitherto been divided into two districts—the northern and the southern—each under the charge of a superintending agent. There is no good reason for continuing this arrangement, and on the score of economy alone it ought to be abolished, and our Indian relations throughout the State placed under the control of one superintendent.

The good of the service and the future welfare of the Indians also imperatively demand the establishment of two reservations in the northern part of the State—one near the coast, and the other in the interior—of sufficient extent for the accommodation of all the Indians in what is now designated as the northern district, and at least one suitable reservation for those in the southern portion of the State. The necessity for these different reservations arises from the great dissimilarity that exists in the habits and customs of the several tribes for whom they are intended.

The hostility of the powerful tribes of the Apaches and Navajoes, mainly located in New Mexico and Arizona, is such, that for the present their management must be left chiefly to the military branch of the government; but measures should be promptly taken for the establishment of suitable reservations for the other Indians in those Territories, and for those now in hostility to the United States, whenever they shall have been properly subdued.

A The unfortunate result of the effort made last spring to return the refugee Cherokees to their homes has largely added to the number of refugees, and greatly increased the expense of their subsistence. This, together with the advance in the prices of clothing and provisions, has so augmented the expense of providing for them as to exhaust the funds set apart for that purpose, and renders a further appropriation necessary. It is doubtful whether the supplies needed could, even now, be forwarded in time to prevent much suffering, and hence the importance of as early action by Congress in the premises as may be practicable.

The able report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs will be found to be replete with interesting facts and judicious suggestions on the subjects to which it relates.