

IRRIGATING DITCHES AND FLUMES FOR MISSION INDIANS,
CALIFORNIA.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

An estimate from the Secretary of the Interior of an appropriation for irrigating ditches and flumes for the Mission Indians, California.

JANUARY 9, 1888.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *January 5, 1888.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of Congress, a copy of a communication from the Secretary of the Interior of the 24th ultimo, submitting an estimate for an appropriation of \$25,000 for irrigating ditches and flumes for the Mission Indians in California.

Respectfully, yours,

C. S. FAIRCHILD,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 24, 1887.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith for presentation to Congress, in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of the act of July 7, 1884 (23 Stat., 254), copy of a letter of 23d instant from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, submitting, with accompanying correspondence, the estimate of appropriation therein noted, in the sum of \$25,000; said amount, or so much thereof as may be required, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior in locating and constructing irrigating ditches and flumes on lands occupied by the Mission Indians in the State of California, which he desires may be inserted in the Indian appropriation bill for the ensuing fiscal year.

The subject has the approval of this Department.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

H. L. MULDROW,
Acting Secretary.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., December 23, 1887.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the inclosed communication from C. C. Painter, dated the 5th day of October last, in which, at my request, he submits a statement of the condition of the Mission Indians in California, and the need of aid from the Government in locating and constructing irrigating ditches to enable them to open farms and cultivate the same as a means of support.

The Mission Indians number about 3,000 souls, and are located on twenty-one reserves, covering an area of 160,762 acres, or 251 square miles, set aside for their use and occupation by Executive orders, dated December 27, 1875; May 15, 1876; May 3, August 25, and September 29, 1877; January 17, 1880; March 2 and 9, 1881; June 27 and July 24, 1882; February 5 and June 19, 1883, and January 25 and March 22, 1886.

I concur in the views and recommendations of Mr. Painter as to the urgent need of aid from the Government to develop the water supply by irrigation through the several reservations, and submit herewith an estimate of appropriation in the sum of \$25,000, with the recommendation that the same be submitted to Congress for its action and consideration as an amendment to the Indian appropriation bill for the next fiscal year.

Very respectfully,

J. D. C. ATKINS,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Proposed amendment to the bill making appropriation for the Indian service for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1889.

This amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to be expended in locating and constructing irrigating ditches and flumes on lands occupied by the Mission Indians in the State of California, under direction of the Secretary of the Interior, \$25,000.

WASHINGTON CITY, October 5, 1887.

DEAR SIR: Referring to our conversation of the other day, and in compliance with your suggestion that I should put my statements in writing, I have the honor to say: Of the nearly 300,000 acres of land embraced within the twenty-one reservations set apart for the Mission Indians in southern California, the late agent, Mr. Ward, estimates that not more than 500 acres can be cultivated by them without irrigation, which, unaided, the Indians are not able to secure. A very small proportion of it can be irrigated or be made a basis of support even by the Government, most of it being absolute desert or inaccessible mountain top.

Of the 3,000 of these Indians, probably 500 are living on old grants, from which every effort is now making to dislodge them, with the chances largely in favor of success. If this is done, we will have 3,000 Indians to be located on 500 acres of land.

The only way in which relief can be afforded, unless more land is purchased for them or the Indians are removed to some other State, is by giving the necessary assistance in the development of water and construction of irrigating ditches.

If the Capitan Grande Reservation is cleared of intruders, as per orders issued by the President through your office (an order which was to have been carried out last spring with reference to several of these men, but which utterly fails of execution, and with reference to all others on the 1st of September last), there will be land enough for those who belong there, provided the San Diego Water Company is not allowed to interfere with their water. This company had a large force at work last summer, when I was there, building a flume across the reservation, a fact of which, I think, your office was not informed until after my visit.

The reservation near Banning, embracing some — acres, is the only one which can be made available for a larger number of Indians than is now upon it. On this reservation some 53 squatters have come, to the exclusion of the Indians, excepting some 20 families, more or less, on the northeast corner, who have water and sufficient land for their support. The integrity of these reservations is the only hope of these Indians. I went over the ground with the agent, and we estimated that it was capable of giving a home to all the Indians who, without it, must be homeless. If these intruders are compelled to leave, and all the land set apart by Executive order for the Indians shall be put into their possession, there would be enough for some 175 or 200 families. But the expenditure of money is necessary for the development of water. Men who are acquainted with the country and the cost of such labor as this would require, assure me that it will cost about \$75,000 to do the work, and that for this sum irrigated farms of 5 acres each could be secured for 150 men, while their dry farms could be allotted to them away from the irrigating ditches. This would make a compact village, if we add the lands now occupied and used by white intruders, of about 200 families.

This would settle the question as to the proper location for the agency buildings, and for a large boarding-school for all the mission Indians.

Whether the Banning Hotel is on or off the reservation is a matter of doubt, but whether on or off, if this plan should be carried out it would be of little value as a hotel, and would be suitable for a school. Doubtless arrangements could be made with the company by which it could be obtained for that purpose.

I wish to emphasize what I know from repeated visits to these Indians and their reservations, that this reservation furnishes the only key to the solution of their problem. It must be maintained in its integrity, else there is no land for them. This land must be irrigated as the condition of giving them a support. At the request of Mr. Dawes, who has also visited the reservation, I bring this to your attention, hoping that an appropriation of \$75,000 may be asked for that purpose.

Yours, very respectfully,

C. C. PAINTER.

I concur.

M. WHITTLESEY.

Hon. J. D. C. ATKINS,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.