Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior today announced completion of plans developed by Indians on seven rancherias in California for distributing group property among themselves and taking it out of Federal trust supervision, under a 1958 law. The Indians accepted the plans at referendums at each rancheria.

The rancherias are Strawberry Valley consisting of one townsite lot in Yuba County, Cache Creek comprising 160 acres in Lake County, Buena Vista with 67.5 acres in Amador County, Ruffeys with 441 acres in Siskiyou County, Mark West with 35.13 acres in Sonoma County, Paskenta with 260 acres in Tellama County and Table Bluff with 20 acres in Humbolt County. These are the first seven of 41 rancherias covered by the 1958 law all of which may eventually be affected by similar property distribution plans.

The lands of the Paskenta Rancheria were sold by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Glencoe Forest Products Company of Sacramento for $13,000 and the proceeds were distributed to two Indian beneficiaries. In all other six cases the lands comprising the rancherias were transferred in fee simple title to Indians named in the distribution plans.

There were three distributees at Ruffeys (including one for whom a conservator was named, at his own request, by the Superior Court of Siskiyou County), three at Cache Creek, two at Buena Vista, eighteen at Table Bluff and one each at Mark West and Strawberry Valley.

With the completion of these distribution plans and removal of the property from Federal trust supervision, the Department announced that the 53 Indian members of the seven rancherias are, under the 1958 law, no longer entitled to special services performed by the United States for Indians because of their status as Indians. All Federal statutes which affect Indians because of their status as Indians no longer apply to them. And the laws of the several States now apply to them as they do to other citizens or persons within their jurisdiction.

Under the 1958 law property received by the Indians through the distribution plans is not subject to taxation at the time of distribution. After distribution, however, it becomes subject to the same taxes that apply to property generally.