

CALIFORNIANS REACT TO THE NEWLY-NEGOTIATED RESERVATIONS

According to the *Los Angeles Star*:

“To place upon our most fertile soil the most degraded race of aborigines upon the North American continent; to invest them with the rights of sovereignty, and to teach them that they are to be treated as powerful and independent nations, is planting the seeds of future disaster and ruin.”

The majority report of the California Senate committee assigned to examine the treaties concluded:

“As to the wild Indians now located within this State, your committee must protest against locating them within our limits. Occupying an important frontier position on the great Pacific...it is indispensable that this State should be wholly occupied by a homogeneous population, all contributing, by their character and occupation, to its strength and independence. To take any portion of the country west of the Sierra Nevada, for the home of the wild, and generally hostile Indians, would be manifestly unwise and impolitic...”

Questions:

1. What is a homogeneous population? Do you think a homogeneous population was necessary to the character and strength of the new state?
2. What do the authors of the first quote think about the idea of American Indian sovereignty?
3. What words are used to characterize the California Indians? Do you think these feelings were typical of most Californians at the time?