
SAN FRANCISCO, *January 13, 1851*

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival of Dr. Wozencraft and family on the 27th, my own arrival on the 29th ultimo, and Colonel Barbour's on the 8th instant. We have all been busily occupied in gathering information touching the general subject of our mission, and in reference to the most expedient method to be pursued. We have concluded, at least for the present, to act together, and shall to-morrow go down to San José (the capital) to consult with the governor and members of the legislature, and, if possible, ascertain *facts* in relation to the recent (reported) disturbances upon the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, as well as in other parts of the State. We have here had reports of outbreaks and disturbances, first in one quarter then another, almost daily, since our arrival, the most of which we have since discovered to be greatly exaggerated or wholly untrue. Of one thing there is no doubt—the Indians are in a very destitute, dissatisfied, and unsettled state throughout this whole region, and we think, as do many intelligent citizens of the State, that our arrival has been very opportune. Enclosed you will receive a printed copy of a circular or address we have made to the people of this State, and shall be happy if the views we express shall meet the approbation of the President. We have employed Mr. John McKee as our secretary, with an assurance that his salary shall be made equal to that of other good clerks in this country. Upon no other terms could we secure his services, or those of

any other competent person. With a view to economy, we have not yet appointed a commissary or employed interpreters, but I suppose we shall have to employ both as soon as the weather and roads permit our setting out on a general "visitation of our parish."

In one of my former despatches I called your attention to the expenses which I foresaw we should necessarily incur in this country; to the inadequacy of our own *per diem* allowance; the necessity for additional legislation on the subject, and of the early transmission of additional funds. As Congress is now in session, we hope these matters have all had your attention. Exchange here is against New York some 6 or 6½ per cent. As the government has always immense sums lying idle in the custom-house here, I would suggest your obtaining a check, for whatever sum you may wish to send us, from the Treasury Department. Two of our bales of blankets were carried away and lost in a small river on the isthmus. I shall forward to Messrs. Grant & Barton, New York, the necessary vouchers to enable them to recover the amount from the insurance office. I have requested them to send the amount to my family at Wheeling, and will, when advised of the remittance, charge myself with the amount. Our goods were all wet in the transit between Chagres and Panama, but, so far as I have been able to examine, they are not materially injured. I am informed they will be very acceptable to the Indians. We have not yet met with Mr. Adam Johnston, nor can we learn what, if anything, he has accomplished. In our next despatch I hope we shall have some of your favors to acknowledge, and some more satisfactory information to communicate.

With regard, your most obedient servant,

R. McKEE.

Hon. LUKE LEA,

Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.

P. S.—To give you some idea of the actual expenses of living and travelling in this country, I will add a few items: Landing from the ship, each person, \$2 to \$3; trunk, &c., portorage, \$1 to \$2; board per week at first hotels, \$45 to \$50; board per week at good private houses, \$25 to \$30; (these rates we pay;) washing, \$6 per dozen; shaving, 50 cents; hair-cutting, \$1; passage on steamers, *about* 10 cents per mile; meals on ditto, *in addition*, \$1 50 to \$2 each; *birth to sleep in*, \$1 50 to \$2 per night. On land, meals \$1 50; horse-feed \$1 to \$2; average expenses, 30 to 40 cents per mile. After visiting San José, we propose to visit Benicia and Sonoma, the residence of General Smith, and under his advice, and with his aid, organize our travelling party. Reliable and intelligent interpreters are scarce, and will cost us from half an ounce to one ounce per day, besides subsistence. Common laborers from \$4 to \$6; mechanics, \$8 to \$12 and \$16.