

The Indian Reservations.

The seekers for political popularity are waging an ardent war against the action of the Indian Commissioners in selecting reservations for the Indians with whom they have treated. Those restless politicians who are always brim-full of patriotism, have discovered that the reservations of the Indian Commissioners are most useless and wanton invasions of the "rights of the people," and that the white man has been shamefully wronged to the advantage of the "miserable redskin."

This hue-and-cry against the Indian Commissioners has been set on by the leaders of the Democratic party, and all the rag-tag and bob-tail join readily in the chorus. They have been belabored most unmercifully for six months past, the worst imputations have been uttered against them, and all who have striven in the least to stem the violent gale of denunciation have been pronounced no better than the Commissioners themselves.

Now, we are not going to enter into any labored defence of the Commissioners, but we cannot refrain from saying that the manner in which they have been assaulted in executive documents and legislative halls has been a very ungenerous and unjust one. We are among those who believe the Commissioners have acted honestly, although they may not always have acted judiciously, and we therefore hold that these sweeping attacks upon the manner in which they have performed their duties are unwarranted and wrong.

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It may be that some of the reservations made by the Commissioners are larger than they should be, and that they embrace valuable mining and agricultural tracts of land which ought not to come within their limits. We have taken some pains to inquire in regard to these matters, and we are inclined to think that in one or two instances such has been the case. But that all of the reservations are amenable to charges like these, does nowhere appear, and we have looked in vain for some tangible evidence beyond mere assertion which should go to prove the position of those engaged in opposing the confirmations of the treaties. Under the circumstances, common courtesy demands that some discrimination should be used in attacking the system.

One of the most pretentious requests of those who say most upon this subject is, that the Indians shall be removed from California. They do not propose to take them to Oregon, for Oregon has Indians enough already. They cannot take them to the banks of the Colorado or Gila, for there also are already too many. The plan promulgated therefore is, to remove them east of the Sierra Nevada. This scheme is broached with the greatest confidence; and the Commissioners are censured severely for their want of penetration in not having recommended and pursued such course in the beginning. Nothing can illustrate more pertinently the improper nature of this onslaught, than

with the greatest confidence; and the Commissioners are censured severely for their want of penetration in not having recommended and pursued such course in the beginning. Nothing can illustrate more pertinently the improper nature of this onslaught, than this proposition; for, when the Commissioners first commenced operations, no man dreamed that it would be possible to remove the Indians from the State. Indian war, and every species of depredation, had contributed to alarm and harass our citizens, and the great mass were anxious for an honorable and permanent peace. It was not then thought worth while to deliver long harangues about the dangers and inconvenience of permitting Indian tribes to be located in our midst, nor did men expend whole columns of maiden sorrows over the loss of a few acres of the public domain, but all were anxious to see peace made upon such proper conditions as should render it lasting.

The Commissioners acted just as other men of sense and humanity would in like circumstances. They found that the primary cause of the Indian difficulties was the propensity they had for stealing horses and cattle—that these animals were taken for food—and that, whenever the Indians were pursued and punished, they retaliated by picking off the straggling white men who unfortunately came within their reach. The Commissioners at once, in consonance with old established customs of the Government, resolved to place the Indians upon reservations, feed them, and endeavor to learn them to feed themselves. In those days the idea of carrying them across the mountains had not been heard of; and had it been proposed the Commissioners had no power to perform the undertaking, even had it been demonstrated to be quite practicable.

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But it is now said that the present plan of disposing of the Indians is calculated to injure the State materially, by appropriating a valuable portion of the public domain to a thriftless race, who will be fixed like a perpetual moral ulcer in the midst of the whites; and it is recommended that the Indians be removed beyond the borders of the State. We do not put faith in the recommendation. In the first place, it is hardly possible that the Indians can ever be prevailed upon to emigrate from California. 2d, It does not appear that the country to which it is proposed to drive them will support them. 3d, It will cost the U. S. a very large amount to transport them hence; and 4th, The government will be burdened with their support in their new home. It may be that these objections are of little moment; but all our experience and reading confirms us in the position, that it is almost morally impossible to remove the Indians to the poor and unproductive country upon the other side of the mountains; and were all objections overcome and the emigration once effected, we very much doubt if they could be kept there.

The principal object of all this opposition to the course of the Indian Commissioners is the prevention of the ratification of the treaties which have been made. Now, we have no objection to the interposition of the U. S. Senate in cases where it can be shown that the reservations are not what they should be. Nay more, we would not object to a stay of proceedings in all the cases, until time shall have been given for a full statement of the facts on both sides. But we must protest against any rash and headlong course, which is likely to bring upon us in a new shape and under accumulated horrors, another Indian disturbance. That should be avoided at all hazards, and by all reasonable means. The meanest comprehension should understand this; and the Senate of the United States should act with caution and deliberation

United States should act with caution and deliberation in the premises. We are now at peace with most of the Indians in our borders. That result has been secured (right or wrong) mainly through the exertions of the Indian Commissioners; and the Government of the United States owes it to humanity, to our interests, and to its own honor to use such sound discretion as shall not destroy the existing pacific relations. Most assuredly an unconditional annulment of the treaties would have that effect; and we cannot, therefore, believe it possible that the Senate will so far forget its duty as to do itself so useless an injustice and us so great a wrong.

For ourselves, we are most anxious that the Indians should be removed from California, although we entertain no doubts as to a sufficiency of land for all should they be permitted to remain. But we cannot believe the scheme a feasible one. All the information we have of the country proposed as their future home, does not speak of it favorably, and we may

therefore be permitted to doubt the correctness of the loud assertions which are daily made. Under these circumstances of great doubt, with the certainty staring us in the face that any rash destruction of subsisting relations will plunge us into an Indian war, it behoves the treaty-making power to weigh well the different bearings of this most vital and important matter, and to decide it upon the coolest convictions of calm reasoning.

