

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PACIFIC,
Benicia, February 26, 1855.

SIR: Reports from Brevet Lieutenant Colonel R. C. Buchanan, commanding Fort Humboldt, show a lamentable state of affairs on the Klamath river, in consequence of the occurrences mentioned in my report of the 30th January. Captain Judah, on arriving at the scene of disturbance, found that the "hostile Indians," as they are called, had taken to the mountains; and that some of the whites, instead of pursuing them, had banded together to exterminate the peaceable Indians, who had given up their arms, and were living on their ranches under promise of protection and security. Captain Judah remained in their vicinity, and succeeded in frustrating, for a time, these murderous schemes; and also in exerting a moral influence over some of the better disposed whites, by which it is hoped further aggression upon the harmless natives is, for a time, stayed. It appears there is not so much as a justice of the peace in that section. There is no law, except that of common humanity, which would justify an interference by the military authority. Captain Judah's mission was, therefore, one of extreme delicacy; and he seems to have exercised much judgment. He was compelled to return to his post the 7th February, Colonel Buchanan not being able to supply him with provisions on account of the season of the year.

I have had an interview with Colonel Henley, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, on the subject. He expresses his conviction that the excitement has passed away for the time, and that nothing more can be done, but that things had better be left to take their course. He has appointed a special agent to repair immediately to the Klamath, who will confer with Colonel Buchanan on his way. Colonel Buchanan has special instructions to support the agent in every way he can, and to call for more troops if necessary. Captain Judah found himself compelled, either to abandon the pursuit of what are called the *hostile* Indians, (though, as my report of January 30 shows, they only retaliated when attacked) or to give up the inoffensive tribes to massacre. He properly chose to remain and protect the latter.

In this, as in a thousand other instances, the Indians were not to blame. The contest is between a party of whites, few in number,

SECRETARY OF WAR.

75

who would wantonly "exterminate," after disarming them, and the more right-minded, who would protect them, both out of humanity, and to avoid the disastrous consequences of the retaliation which would certainly be attempted. It is hard that the troops should be called upon to mediate between these contending parties, while they have also to restrain the Indians, and try to protect them from destruction. Yet such is mainly their duty in California. It is useless, even where there are courts, to bring offenders before them, for in such cases they have been uniformly acquitted.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN E. WOOL,
Major General.

Lieut. Col. L. THOMAS,
A. A. General, Headquarters of the Army, City of New York.

Respectfully forwarded, by command of Brevet Lieutenant General Scott, March 26, 1855.

S. COOPER,
Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, *March 27, 1855.*
