

NATIONAL HOTEL,

Washington, March 6, 1851.

Sir: According to an appointment, dated June 10th, 1851, and a contract dated June 11th, 1851, made between Colonel Adam Johnston, United States Indian agent for the valley of San Joaquin, and Doctor W. M. Ryer, of California, (copies of which are in possession of the department,) the said Doctor Ryer, after furnishing medical and hospital stores, and employing three medical gentlemen as assistants, and otherwise providing all necessary means for the fulfilment of the said contract as rapidly as the apparent emergency required, at an expenditure of several thousand dollars, besides a great exposure to danger from disease or assassination, fulfilled in good faith, within four months from its date, all the obligations entered into by him in the said contract. The original appointment, contract, together with the bills for services rendered, all certified by Colonel Adam Johnston, have been forwarded by Doctor Ryer, and are now in my possession. At the same time I also received a document constituting me his attorney for the collection of his claim, or bills, for the whole amount, twelve thousand dollars or more, as stated in the said bills, or claims.

I will not call your attention, sir, to the arduous nature of the service rendered by Doctor Ryer, for, I believe it is thoroughly understood and appreciated by you; but believing Colonel Adam Johnston to be an accredited agent of the government, and believing also that the government of the United States will promptly respond to the actions of its agents, I respectfully submit the matter to you for a final settlement, and earnestly solicit your immediate and favorable consideration of it, as all unnecessary delay must be attended with injurious consequences to the citizen who thus applies for the adjustment of his claim against the government.

I have the honor, respectfully, to subscribe myself your humble and obedient servant,

GEORGE RYER.

To the COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Department of the Interior.

*Extract of a letter from Adam Johnston, esq., sub-Indian agent, valley of
San Joaquin, dated October 8, 1851.*

“Another matter, which I alluded to heretofore, and which I now desire to lay before the department, is the appointing or employing Doctor W. M. Ryer to vaccinate the Indians. I looked upon this as an important matter, inasmuch as several cases of small-pox were reported in San Francisco at the time. The Indians had come from the mountains and settled upon these reservations, in rancheros or villages, by which they were thrown closely together, and in places where such diseases were more likely to be communicated to them. A few of the Indians had been vaccinated when at the missions, and consequently understood the object of it. I believe it was in the year 1841 that the then Governor of California is said to have introduced the small-pox among the Indians, by which many thousands were destroyed in the valley of the Sacramento. The Indians were greatly gratified at what they esteemed the goodness of the great American father, in sending among them a medicine man, to protect them from that fearful disease. I have seen them gather around Dr. Ryer in crowds, holding out their arms, eager to be vaccinated. I am satisfied that great good will result from it, even should no actual necessity then have existed. They must receive good impressions of the Americans, in contradistinction to that of their former oppressive governor.

“The claims of Doctor Ryer for services from the 4th of June to the 26th of September last, together with his reports to me, are herewith forwarded. Knowing that much good must result from his labors, in several points of view, I hope his accounts may be favorably considered.”
