

INDIAN RESERVE, MERCEDE RIVER, CAL.,
April 11, 1851.

SIR: I had the honor to receive, by the last express which reached our train, a communication from you under date of January 25, reminding me that I had not been prompt in rendering my accounts under the "Act concerning the disbursement of public money," approved January 23, 1823.

I certainly owe an explanation of my seeming delinquency in not regularly forwarding statements of my accounts-current to the department, as required by the law. It was, however, with no intention of not strictly complying with the requisitions of the act "concerning the disbursement of public money," that my seeming delinquency exists, but owing wholly to other circumstances.

The duties prescribed in my instructions, such as to obtain "statistical information relative to the Indians of this country, the number of tribes, their location, the probable extent of territory claimed by them; their language," &c., required me to be almost constantly moving from point to point. Owing to the insecurity in carrying papers over this country, where we are exposed to the weather, and are frequently obliged to spend night after night without any covering whatever, I deposited such papers as were of value to me at the mission near San Francisco for safe keeping. On my return from the valley of Sacramento in November last, it was my intention to close up my accounts with the department, for I felt that I had even then neglected too long to do so. Rumors from this region in regard to anticipated trouble with the Indians, induced me to set about reaching this part of the country as soon as possible. It was thought that if I were among the Indians with a few presents, they might be quieted for the time being, and I hastily left without forwarding statements of my accounts up to that date. Soon after my arrival in this part of the country, the Indians declared open war against the whites, and I have almost constantly been moving over the country, from day to day, ever since.

On the receipt of your letter of January 25, I endeavored to get my papers together, and on reaching this place began making out statements of accounts up to January 13, 1851, which I have the honor herewith to transmit.

I did not meet the commissioners until the 13th day of February last, since which time I have been mostly with them up to Tuesday last, when I left them at Camp McLean, on the Fresno river, for the purpose of locating several tribes or bands of Indians, with whom they had effected a treaty on the 19th day of March last.

In connexion with this subject, allow me to say, I anticipate great difficulties in maintaining the stipulations of this treaty, or any other that may be entered into, unless a sufficient force be placed at the disposal of such persons as may have charge of the respective reservations. That force is more necessary *immediately* in locating the Indians and making a beginning, than it will be at any other time. In the first place, the Indians are not to be trusted or depended upon where they possess any advantage. On the other hand, the whites have lost friends, property, &c., by the Indians, and many of them will kill certain Indians whom they suspect, whenever opportunities present themselves.

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I have two Indians right here whose lives are threatened by white men, who supposed they were engaged in killing their friends. I am alone here at present, but shall endeavor to prevent any revenge of the kind being taken, as I know a single outbreak at this time would be disastrous.

Another source of difficulty results from retailing ardent spirits to the Indians and reckless whites in the vicinity of the Indian rancherias. Within this reservation there are some four or five houses retailing liquor, and as many more within a few miles on the opposite side of the river. I have written notices to those within the reservation, giving them the law in regard to selling Indians liquor, and shall endeavor to suppress it as far as possible, for I know it to be the great obstacle in managing the Indians.

There is a public road running through this reservation which branches off to two ferries, and one ford on this river, all within three miles of this spot. At each of the crossings there is a public house or tent where liquor is retailed. The house or tent from which I write is one of them, on the bank of the river, and within one hundred yards of the Indian rancheria, near to which the public road runs to reach the house and ferry.

These things multiply the difficulties in managing the Indians. Several have already taken place at this point, and I am gratified to learn that, on reaching here a few evenings ago, I was the means of preventing bloodshed, and in all probability an entire blow up of the treaty.

A young man, having first heated himself with liquor at this house, proceeded, about 12 o'clock at night, to the Indian rancheria, and demanded a woman to sleep with for the night. Not being supplied as promptly as he expected, he set about appropriating the wife of an Indian to himself, when he was seized and tied by a portion of the Indians, while others ran to me to know what they should do with him. By the time I got out of bed, the man had broken loose from them and rushed into the tent, followed, or rather surrounded, by a large number of Indians.

Both parties were clamorous and noisy, the Indians telling me their story in Spanish and Indian, (all at a time,) and the white man swearing lustily and loudly that he would massacre all the Indians.

I told them I could not decide the case in the dark; that both parties must appear before me in the morning, when I would decide it. After some time the Indians became partially pacified, and returned to their rancheria, as did the white man to his wagon.

In the morning the Indians promptly assembled. I then went to the white man to get him face to face with the Indians. Some eight of the Indians stated that the white man had rudely attempted to defile one of their women before their eyes. The white man protested that he was "only looking for a mule," when the Indians jumped upon and tied him. Being a white man, he elicited the sympathy of several others around, who occasionally let slip half-suppressed oaths at the Indians. Having no power at hand to adjust the matter properly, I told the Indians that the man was drunk, and did not know what he was doing.

As this was the first offence, I wanted them to forgive him. They said they would, but that the white man must do so no more.

After the Indians left, I told the white man they were quite dissatisfied and enraged. He soon got across the river, and on his way no doubt rejoicing.

This is only one instance of the numerous difficulties that will naturally occur, under existing circumstances, here.

In my last communication I recommended the establishment of small fortifications along the valley of the San Joaquin, and I again urge the necessity of so doing, at such places as may be set apart as reservations.

I am, very respectfully, your humble servant,
ADAM JOHNSTON,
Indian Sub-agent, Valley San Joaquin.

Hon. LUKE LEA,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington City.

CAMP BARBOUR, SAN JOAQUIN RIVER, CAL.,
May 1, 1851.

SIR: Our last joint communication to you, under date of 25th March, from Camp Gibson, enclosed a copy of the treaty concluded by us on the Mariposa river with the Si-yau-te, Poto-yau-te, Co-co-noon, Apangape, Aplache, and Awallache tribes of Indians.

We have now the honor to report that on the 27th March we left that camp, and that evening reached Camp McLean, on the Fresno river, where we remained till the 12th of April, awaiting the return of our couriers, or runners, sent up into the mountains to invite the Indians to meet us there or on this river. It was finally agreed that we should move over to the San Joaquin, where we were promised a meeting with numerous tribes, or bands. We arrived, accordingly, at this camp on the 15th ultimo; found some Indians on the ground, and others continued to arrive daily until the 26th, when, having meanwhile treated the red men and their families to as much provisions as they could eat, and finding them in excellent good humor, we met them in council, explained to them the object and purposes of our mission, and submitted to them our propositions for a general treaty of peace, and a settlement of all existing difficulties. On the 28th we met them in general council again, heard their replies, and finally, on the 29th ultimo, entered into a formal treaty with the following sixteen tribes, whose country we are now in, viz:

The How-ech-es, }
Chook-chau-ces, } Under the grand chief Nai-yak-qua.
Chou-chill-ies, }
Po-ho-necch-es, }
Nook-choos, }