

---

SAN FRANCISCO, *May 13, 1851.*

DEAR SIR: Referring to Captain Keyes for the incidents of our journey from San Joaquin, and of the destructive fires here and in Stockton, (by the latter we lost our five packages Indian goods stored with Davis and Smith—our goods here are fortunately all saved,) I enclose invoice of Indian goods turned over to you at Camp Barbour, and seventy-two pairs of pantaloons sent with Captain Keyes' baggage, amounting in all, at prime cost, to \$2,257 17. The pantaloons are not exactly the article I desired to get for the Indians, but are the best I could find in this market at any reasonable price. I also enclose your account from my books as disbursing agent of the commission. After crediting you with \$600 mileage, and \$1,456 (182 days at \$8) for six months' salary as commissioner, up to the 9th ultimo, and charging the funds sent you herewith by Captain Keyes, a balance of \$500 will remain in your hands, to be accounted for hereafter, accompanied by appropriate vouchers. I regret to say no additional funds have as yet come to hand from the department at Washington, and in consequence I can send you by this opportunity no larger sum. What I do send is from my own private purse. As soon as remittances reach me I will advise you, by way of Stockton, authorizing your drafts for such additional sums as you may find absolutely necessary for expenses in your progress south. I see by the last "Intelligencer" that instead of \$75,000, the appropriation for our purposes in California is only \$25,000, for the

year 1851. This will render the strictest economy doubly necessary in all our outlays and contracts; and unless an arrangement can be made with some of the large ranch owners down south for the supply of cattle at fair rates, to await appropriations at the next session of Congress, almost the whole amount now understood to be appropriated will be required to make good our arrangement for the subsistence of the Indians last treated with, and settled on reservation No. 2. If there is no mistake in the printing of the Indian appropriation bill, the department or the committees of Congress have made a most unfortunate estimate of our wants for the public service in California. That the peace and security of a frontier of nearly two hundred miles depends upon our ability to keep the Indians in good humor by liberal appropriations for their subsistence, there can be no doubt. How this is to be done by means of a pitiful grant of \$25,000, is beyond my arithmetic. In a letter to the department as early as November 9, 1850, I suggested that at least \$100,000 or \$150,000 should be appropriated to this work, and was disappointed, as you know, on finding that Mr. Lea, in his annual report, has asked for only \$75,000. If his estimate has been cut down to \$25,000, I shall consider it a most egregious blunder. The responsibility, however, will not rest upon us. In all our future treaties I suppose we shall have to confine ourselves to a small outlay for provisions *at and during the treaty*—to a distribution of the goods we have on hand as presents, and the promise of cattle and flour for subsistence for the years 1852 and 1853, instead of 1851 and 1852. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the treaties already made provide for the tribes which have been engaged in open hostilities and are the most destitute. In other parts of the State, supplies of provisions may with less danger be postponed. Since my arrival here, I have met gentlemen from the southern part of the State, who report that *good cattle* can be purchased from the ranches in that quarter at from \$12 to \$16 per head, according to age and weight. After you get down into that region, I will be pleased to hear from you on this subject. A gentleman from Humboldt bay informs me that cattle are quite plenty there, and can be bought at from five to eight cents per pound net. Shortly after the arrival of the next steamer from Panama, I design going north to make inquiries and arrangements for holding *talks* with the Indians at some future day. It is not probable I shall be gone over twelve or fifteen days, and on my return will be happy to find letters from you at Messrs. Tallant & Wildes'. If you are in want of any more goods for presents, let me know and I will execute your orders. Your son Kit has concluded to go up with Captain Keyes. There are rumors here that, in consequence of short appropriations for the Quartermaster's and Commissary's departments, it may be necessary to withdraw or at least reduce your escort. If on inquiry I find this is seriously contemplated, I shall advise that at least part of the four companies composing Captain Keyes' command may be organized into posts at our Indian reservations on the Mercede and San Joaquin rivers. I consider it highly important that the Indians should have some protection from bad white men while making their new settlements, and until regular agents, teachers, &c., are established among them. I will address a letter, in substance like this, to our colleague, Dr. Wozencraft, and send copies of both, with a tran-

80

S. Doc. 4.

script of our journal while *acting as a board*, to the Indian department at Washington, by the steamer of the 15th instant. Whether I shall require an escort in my tour to the northern district I do not know, but will ascertain when I get to Humboldt bay or Trinidad. In the hope that my next will convey more agreeable news, and that I shall soon and frequently hear from you, and your success in treating with the tribes in your southern route, I remain, very respectfully, your friend and most obedient servant,

REDICK McKEE.

Col. GEO. W. BARBOUR,  
*King's River, California.*

P. S.—From the foregoing you will judge whether it will not be best to withdraw part of the cattle furnished by Don Pablo de la Toba from the San Joaquin and give them to the King's River Indians, or Four Creek tribes, for present supplies. As I returned through Stockton, I ascertained that instead of having a *bargain* in the offer of flour from Waddington & Co. at \$6 50, the ruling rates there during March and April was \$5 25 to \$5 37½, and in this city the rates in those months were \$4 25 to \$4 75. I can now purchase first-rate brands at \$4 50 to \$4 75 per hundred pounds.

---