

No. 71.

SAN FRANCISCO, (*Alt. Cal.*) May 14, 1851.

Sir: We, as a joint board of commissioners, having dissolved for the time being, with a view of proceeding to the three several sections of the country simultaneously, I avail myself of the earliest opportunity of placing before the department such suggestions as the occasion may require, and such information as may be in my possession.

In the first place, I would respectfully, but most urgently, impress upon the department *the great necessity* of quieting and pacifying the Indians in this country, before they become accustomed to the *usages of war*—before they learn and gain that dangerous experience.

It is my opinion, if they should gain that knowledge, we will have the most formidable of all the aborigines of this continent to contend with, and a protracted war, terminating only in their extermination, and at a fearful cost of life and treasure. They do not lack the *nerve* and *daring* of the best of the Atlantic Indians—they but lack the experience; and, with that, their mountain fastnesses will be *impregnable*. In fact they are measurably so now with their imperfect defence. There are but few of the Caucasian races who can endure the hardships and privations of their eternal snow, and *none* who can chase them down.

You have been advised of the policy we have deemed it expedient to adopt. Permit me to say a few words in relation to it.

The common and favorite place of abode of the Indians in this country was in the valleys and within the range of mountains. The greater portion were located, and had resided as long as their recollections and traditions went, on the grounds *now being turned up for gold*, and now occupied by the gold hunters, by whom they have been displaced and driven higher up in the range of mountains, leaving their fisheries and acorn ground behind. They have been patient in endurance, until necessity taught them her lesson, (which they were not slow to learn, as it is measurably instinctive with the Indian,) and thus they adopt, from *necessity*, that which was deemed a virtue among Spartans and the result is, we have an incipient border war; many lives have been lost; an incalculable amount of property stolen; and the development and settlement of the country much retarded. And this will ever remain unavoidable, so long as they are *compelled or permitted* to remain in the mountains. They can come down in small marauding parties by night, and sweep off the stock of the miners and farmers, and before the loss is known they will be beyond pursuit; and I venture the assertion, that this would be the case in defiance of all the troops that could be kept here.

Our policy is, as you have been informed, to get them down from their mountain fastnesses and place them in reservations, along in the foot hills bordering on the plains. The miners will then be between them and the mountains, forming a formidable cordon or barrier through which it would be difficult to take their families unobserved; and in those reservations there will be no place for concealing stolen stock, and they can there have all the protection which can and should be afforded them against their persecutors. And, lastly, they will there learn the ways of civilization, and thereby become useful members in the community, instead of being an expensive and dead weight to the general government. The country set apart for them so far is very poor soil; but a small portion of it is adapted to agricultural purposes, but remarkably well adapted to the raising of stock; and we think it would be good policy to supply them liberally with brood stock in addition to the beef cattle which is indispensable for *present consumption*, as the faithful fulfilment of the treaties on their part will in measurably depend on it. *They must have food.*

We think that it will not only be good policy, but that it will be a good investment, so to speak, to both parties. The increase will soon be sufficient to place them beyond the necessity of receiving aid from the general government. The consumption of beef in this country, owing to the great emigration, is supposed to be greater than the increase of the stock; consequently the investment in brood stock, at this time, will result in a profit, as stock must increase in value; thus they will become the recipients of so judicious an investment.

This will require money, and it is a subject of surprise and regret that the appropriation for our use has been cut down *so small*. The amount required will be seemingly large, but, by pursuing the foregoing policy, it will be found to be small in comparison to all treaties where *annuities* are given.

The middle district having been allotted to me, (commencing at the San Joaquin river south, and extending up through all the Sacramento valley north, to the head waters of the Sacramento and Feather rivers,) it being the one for which I expressed a preference to the department soon after learning of my appointment, I am in hopes it will be assigned to me.

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On this occasion I deem it due to the department and myself to state, that so long as we were acting conjointly, almost all of the contracts and purchases were made by the disbursing officer, without my knowledge or participation, the department having placed the funds in his hands.

I presume he alone will be held responsible; but now, acting as I do in my individual capacity, I hold myself responsible for all the contracts and disbursements that may be contracted by me for the above mentioned district. I have made the preliminary arrangements to meet, talk and treat with a portion of the Indians in this district; and am only awaiting the arrival of the mail, in which we expect the communication in relation to means, without which nothing can be done. In this country everything depends on the ready money.

All communications may be addressed to me here.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. M. WOZENCRAFT.

Hon. LUKE LEA,

*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

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