
READING RANCHO, *August 7, 1851.*

SIR: Your communication of the 22d of May has just met my observation through the columns of the California Courier, published at the instance of Redick McKee, esq., who, it would appear, is yet in San Francisco. I am pleased to hear from the department; and at the same time to learn that our labors are not only appreciated, but have so far met with the approbation of the Indian Bureau.

In relation to that portion of your communication in reply to a letter from Redick McKee, esq., I presume that an expression of my opinion is required by you. Permit me to say, that the first intimation I have had of such a letter having been addressed to the department was the letter above referred to, as published in reply to it.

Mr. McKee's recommendation "to send a delegation of Indians to Washington" I disapprove of, as it would not only be attended with great inconvenience and expense, but I think such a measure wholly unnecessary. On one occasion I took an influential chief, who had been hostile, to San Francisco. On his return, he told me he could not induce the wild Indians to believe what he told them he had seen, and it would be necessary that all should see ere they would believe; and

I think if we would inspire the Indians of California with respect for our government by taking them to Washington, it would be an act of injustice to neglect any of the captains of tribes; and to avoid this, the delegation would consist of a chief commissioner at the head, I suppose, and some three hundred minor chiefs. At a moderate computation, this would cost \$150,000. I have placed the above amount at a minimum figure, as there are more than three hundred bands in this country, and each band possessing its own captain. I am satisfied, be the cost what it may, it would be far better expended in beef; they would be better pleased, and the results terminate far more beneficial, as it is my wish to teach them industrious habits, and this can only be effected by their remaining at home and attending to the wants of their people.

In relation to Mr. McKee's recommendation of appointing a superintendent for this State and Oregon, permit me to say that I think the department the most competent to judge as to the expediency or necessity of such a measure. He recommends that the laws and regulations of the department be modified, or others adopted suitable for this particular latitude. In conformity with the request from you that we report such as we deem advisable, permit me to say that I have no doubt but that there is a necessity for some modification, and probably additions, to the laws and regulations of the Indian Bureau applicable to the Indians of California particularly; but I fear I shall not find time from my duties to give the subject the attention it demands—not, at least, until I may have accomplished the object of my present mission. I doubt not but that Mr. McKee has anticipated your request by arranging something in accordance with his own suggestion, as, in my opinion, he has had ample time to do so.

There is a subject, however, that I would wish to present at this time for your consideration, with the hope that you may deem it of sufficient importance to cause it to be placed before Congress at an early period. It is in relation to those Indians who are located in the valleys, and who are unwilling to remove from their old homes. I think they should be permitted to remain, and be secured in their rights of possession, in accordance with the laws that formerly governed them. The Mexican government, on granting lands to her subjects, did so with a reservation in favor of the Indians who may be found located thereon, securing to them a free and uninterrupted occupancy of a certain portion of the soil and water privileges. This, I think, is not only due them, but I deem it a good policy as a means of domesticating and stimulating them to industry.

The legislature of this State has passed laws in relation to the government of Indians more particularly applicable to the above-named class; and it now only requires the action of Congress in securing them the occupancy of the soil, in order to make their situation such as no longer to be an expense to the government, and very materially improve their condition.

It would appear that Mr. McKee's letter, addressed to the department, has been *published* in a Washington paper, from which *he* publishes extracts here, where he states that *he* took the Indians to their reservation, pointed out the boundaries to them, and established them

thereon. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether Mr. McKee performs his duties through the medium of the press or in the field. All that I desire is, to come at the inference that would be drawn from his remarks; *i. e.*, that Colonel Barbour and myself were not attending to our duties. In relation to this, allow me to remark that Colonel B. and myself examined the country, located the reservation, and pointed out the boundaries to those Indians delegated to accompany us for that purpose. Mr. McKee at that time refused to accompany us; and I think it not only an act of supererogation on his part in accompanying the Indians subsequently to the reservation, but thereby incurring an expense wholly unnecessary.

On the 1st instant I concluded a treaty with twelve tribes, the original of which is herewith enclosed. Ten of said tribes are valley Indians, and very friendly disposed towards the whites; but have much just cause of complaint, as the whites have taken possession of their homes, and they, through necessity, are reduced to servitude. Their labor is required only in the harvesting season, and the balance of the year they may shift for themselves the best way they can. The two additional tribes were from the foot-hills, and are not so friendly. It was with some difficulty that they were brought in. I had reason to believe that they were confederating against the whites, and took measures to prevent it. The valley and foot-hill Indians have heretofore been inimical to each other; but, as before stated, they have been interchanging visits of late, and meeting in council, and I had reason to believe it was with a view of confederating against their common enemy, the whites.

The provisions of the treaty, you will perceive, are the same as the preceding ones. The land given to them is measurably unoccupied; and, for all agricultural purposes, would remain so for time to come, as it is very poor, with the exception of two or three small valleys. I gave a license to trade with the Indians to Mr. Bidwell, who has great influence over the Indians, and it is expected that he will bring in additional tribes from the mountains who are now troublesome. He was very kind, and rendered efficient service in forwarding my mission.

I should have mentioned that on the former occasion, in negotiating the Union treaty, Mr. S. Norris was active in doing all he could, sending out Indian couriers in all directions, and using his influence, which is very considerable.

I am now in the immediate vicinity of those hostile and very troublesome Indians, located on the Pitt fork of the Sacramento river, and intend going among them as soon as a treaty is concluded with those disposed to be friendly at and near this location.

Major Reading had prepared the Indians by informing them of my intended visit, and they appeared to be much pleased after my first talk, saying that it was good, and that it was true, for the great Shekta (Major Reading) had told them the same.

It is the opinion of all persons living in this section of country that pacific measures cannot be effected with those Indians until they are chastised and subdued; they are, and always have been, very inveterate in their hatred towards the whites, and very formidable from the time of the first aggressions by the whites.

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The escort has recently been increased; they now number fifty well mounted men, commanded by Major Fitzgerald, a very gentlemanly and efficient officer. And here I would wish to state that my intercourse with the officers of the escort that accompanied us south, as well as those now on duty with me, has been of the most friendly and amicable nature; and I am the more gratified in this, that it anticipates the injunctions of your communication.

You will perceive that I anticipated your requirement, by sending the original of the treaty concluded on the Stanislaus river. The one concluded at Union camp, on the Yuba river, would have been sent but for a misapprehension. The original is herewith enclosed.

Respectfully, I remain your friend and obedient servant,

O. M. WOZENCRAFT,
U. S. Indian Agent.

HON. LUKE LEA,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.
