
DISBURSING AGENCY INDIAN DEPARTMENT IN CALIFORNIA,
San Francisco, August 19, 1852.

SIR: Owing to I know not what cause of delay, your letter bearing date 29th July only reached me, through the post office, at 5 p. m. yesterday.

As some three weeks had elapsed since I wrote my last note, without hearing from you, I assumed that you had come to the conclusion I had already reached, that our correspondence about beef contracts, deliveries of flour, &c., to the Indians, had become "stale, flat, and unprofitable," and might as well be dropped; but in this it seems I was mistaken.

You had thrown the first stone, and considered it your prerogative to throw the last. To this I should interpose no sort of objection, if you had not pertinaciously followed up an original injustice by a perversion of my explanation and defence.

I had no object to accomplish in attempting to divert your attention from myself to other gentlemen. What I said in explanation of their course and conduct, seemed necessary for my own vindication from unjust and disreputable surmises and suspicions.

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You had charged that there was impropriety in the manner in which I arranged or contracted with General Estelle for a supply of beef for my party, and also in my secretary's agreeing to receive compensation from that gentleman for extra services while under pay from the government. As neither myself nor my secretary was in any sense subject to your control or animadversion; as your interference in the matter was extra-judicial, if not impertinent, I in the first place denied all impropriety in the transactions themselves, and in the second place submitted that, if you were still incredulous, you had in your department, and under your full control, officers who had acted in the same way, and upon the same principles; and that your attention might with greater propriety be turned to the reform of abuses, if such they were, in your own household, where you had authority, than in mine, where you had none. So far from intimating impropriety on the part of the officers referred to, or suggesting charges against them, I stated expressly that I could discover impropriety in neither case. But you say the cases are not parallel: in my opinion they are almost literally and circumstantially so.

Having heretofore, as I trust, abundantly shown that every single charge, or insinuation of impropriety, touching the transactions or parties in question, was unfounded and unjust, I am quite contented to submit the whole matter to the judgment of our superiors at Washington.

Respectfully, your most obedient servant,

REDICK McKEE,

U. S. Indian Agent, Northern California.

Br. Gen. E. A. HITCHCOCK,
Commanding Pacific Division.