

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,
December 3, 1851.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that information has just been received in this city which leaves but little doubt that depredations of a serious nature have recently been committed upon the persons and property of Americans, by the Indians in the southern part of this State. Accounts of these depredations are principally contained in the papers of this city, copies of which I herewith transmit. These difficulties seem at present only to exist south of the Tulare lake. With the Indians at that point and the more southern portion of the State, Americans have had but little intercourse. I am not advised as to the most southern point, where a treaty has been effected, but it is certain that a large portion of the Indians of California, who are perhaps the most warlike and formidable, reside yet further south. The causes which have led to the recent outbreak in that region I have not been able fully to ascertain. It is said, however, that they became dissatisfied in consequence of treaties having been made with other Indians in the valley, who have, to some extent, been furnished with subsistence. Again, it is said that the sheriff of San Diego county has exacted poll tax from the Indians residing in that county, and that on their refusal to pay that which they could not comprehend, seizures were made of cattle, horses, &c., belonging to them, and disposed of without allowing them the right to redeem.

Many Indians in that region had become partially civilized—cultivated

the earth and raised stock. These are the persons of whom a poll tax had been exacted. I am reliably informed that most of them residing adjacent to the coast, have heretofore been remarkably kind and hospitable to Americans. Their chief, Antonio, is said to be a man of considerable ability and more than ordinary knowledge among them, he having been educated at the mission. He has, up to this time, been friendly to the Americans, and on one occasion, when it was said they were to be attacked, he offered his and the services of his tribe, in their behalf.

Those with whom treaties have been entered into, residing within my agency, upon the San Joaquin, Fresno, Mercede, Tuolumna, and Stanislaus rivers, have been seemingly quiet and contented since I have been furnishing them with food. Difficulties sometimes arise among individuals of the tribes, and frequent rumors of an intended outbreak have been communicated to me; yet I am certain, so long as I can feed them, no general act of hostility need be apprehended. I adopted the course of feeding them as the best possible measure of managing them, and keeping them quiet and contented. With those under my immediate notice I am sure I have succeeded well in doing so. I believe treaties were concluded with some of the Indians in the region of Tulare lake and Texan Pass, who are said to be among the disaffected at this time. This disaffection arose from the fact that those Indians, although treated with, had not received either beef or flour, as other Indians near to them had been furnished.

I am not sure that any provisions were promised them for the present; yet others in the valley having been furnished, they also expected to be supplied. Although I did not know the conditions of any treaty in that region, I should, as a matter of policy, have furnished those Indians with some subsistence, only for the remoteness of their position. It is frequently difficult to make them understand that what has been promised them by treaty, is not to be furnished them until a future day after the ratification of the treaties. This fact, and the fact that other Indians in their vicinity have received presents, and been furnished with some subsistence, while they have not been treated with or received either, may, to some extent, have induced them to commit those recent depredations. Having heard of their disaffection, I should have taken the responsibility to furnish some subsistence heretofore, had it not been, as I have before said, for their great distance of land transportation, and the limited means which I possessed to effect it. I was then, and am still fully satisfied, that whatever such a course might cost the government, it would be better than a war, which I am sure must be the alternative. This dissatisfaction seemed to be increasing daily; and knowing that no action of the government could be taken, in time to furnish the tribes at and south of the Tulare lake with provisions before the rainy season set in, I determined to take the responsibility of furnishing them with some subsistence, for the present, before the rains began to fall, when it would be impossible to do so. In consequence of this state of things, I repaired to this city, to negotiate, if possible, for such amount of supplies as might be necessary to keep them in the valley, contented for the winter. After some difficulty, I found parties willing to furnish such supplies, and rely upon the government for satisfaction.

Those persons are fully advised that no appropriation has as yet been made for such purposes. One of the individuals to whom I refer is Colonel J. C. Fremont, whose extensive acquaintance in the southern or stock region of the State enables him to command any quantity that may be re-

quired. I therefore contracted with him for supplies, and had them on the way for the Indians in the region of the Tulare lake before the news of the outbreak reached me.

Had I succeeded in reaching their country before hostilities commenced, I am sure I could have prevented anything of the kind. The course taken on my part, in advance of instructions, may be objectionable; but I trust my motives may be understood, and that the representation from this State, who I presume understand the character of the Indians in California, and the situation of things here, may explain to the government the absolute necessity of my having adopted it.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, &c., your humble servant,

ADAM JOHNSTON,

United States Sub-Indian Agent.

Hon. A. H. H. STUART,

Secretary of the Interior, Washington City.
