
SAN FRANCISCO, *June 30, 1851.*

SIR: Referring to my last despatches, under date of 13th and 29th ultimo, I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of April 12 and May 9, contents of which are noted, and copies communicated to my colleagues, Messrs. Barbour and Wozencraft. Enclosed you will find copies of my letter to Col. Barbour of 10th, and to Dr. W. of 4th and 6th instant, which, being explanatory of business connected with my accounts as disbursing agent, I deem it proper to submit. The failure of your bureau to forward the funds appropriated by the late Congress has occasioned me no little inconvenience; and had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Collector King, in advancing on my informal draft \$1,000 for Dr. Wozencraft's expenses to the scene of the late Indian disturbances in El Dorado county, he could not have accompanied his escort, and the whole press of the country would have united in condemning the dilatoriness of the commissioners and of the administration. In my letter of the 13th January I advised you that exchange was against New York some 6 to 6½ per cent., and that it would therefore be better for you to obtain a check on the custom-house here and remit whatever sum Congress might place at our disposal. In several subsequent letters I referred to the same state of things, and repeated the same request; so that even when you sent me the paper containing the appropriation approved February 27, 1851, I was still at a loss to know whether you expected me to draw on you or await your remittance. Another result has been my own detention here for several weeks, which should have been employed in my long contemplated journey to the Indian settlements on Eel river, Humboldt bay, Trinidad, and the Klamath. This journey to and through an almost unexplored region will require some three months' time, and necessarily involve much labor and expense. For some weeks past

the news from that quarter has been of a very unsatisfactory description, and evinced the importance and the necessity of my presence in the country. During the past week I was waited on by a committee with the proceedings of a public meeting of American citizens at Trinidad, calling on the commissioners for protection; and in the event of our not being able to afford it, then on the governor of the State. I explained to the gentlemen my readiness, and, indeed, great anxiety, to visit their country and do all in my power to redress their grievances, and promised that, if at all possible, I would set out with an escort of United States troops immediately after the arrival of the steamer due here 4th July. If that mail brings me a remittance, very well; if not, I shall appeal to Col. King to cash my draft upon you for twelve or fifteen thousand dollars to pay our pressing liabilities and give me the means to travel on; but if in this I am unsuccessful, the public business must be postponed still longer, and indefinitely, until you do either send me the money or expressly authorize my drafts.

I also enclose herewith copies of an agreement and award, which I have accidentally obtained, in relation to a very extraordinary transaction on our Indian reservation on the Merced river, between Mr. Adam Johnston, *sub-agent*, and Messrs. Stone and Marks. Hearing, a few days since, that Mr. Marks was here trying to *sell a bill on the Indian department for twelve thousand dollars*, I hunted him up to inquire into the transaction.

Being acquainted with the property, and knowing that the sum stated is three or four times its value, under any circumstances, I had the less hesitancy in telling him that the whole affair was unauthorized by law, and that I had no doubt whatever it would be instantly disavowed by your department. In a letter which I have written to Mr. Stuart, Secretary of the Interior, I have gone more fully into this subject and some other transactions of a kindred character, to all which I feel it my duty to call your attention, as well as his. Every day's experience in this country satisfies me more fully that a distinct system for carrying on Indian affairs in this State and Oregon must finally be adopted. It must have a head, *here on the ground*, clothed with power to appoint, suspend, or depose agents and sub-agents; make all contracts for supplies or for carrying out treaty stipulations; conclude new treaties; in a word, exercise in his department a kind of *alcalde* or *unlimited power*, without having to lose three or four months in submitting questions and awaiting instructions from Washington. On this subject I believe there is no difference of opinion among public men here, and the sooner it is taken up and acted on by the government at Washington, the better it will be for both whites and Indians.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

REDICK McKEE.

Hon. LUKE LEA,

Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.