

The Montana Post.

SATURDAY MORNING, FEB. 8. INDIAN AFFAIRS.

We have a copy of the New York Tribune containing the Report of the Indian Peace Commission. It occupies six columns, and is therefore too voluminous and, as it is chiefly historical and imaginative, not necessary to be reproduced entire. Mr. Greeley is "refreshed" on being "assured by the authoritative report" that his countrymen are "villains, wanton murderers and border-ruffians." After conceding to Mr. Greeley a good head for making election returns, a penchant for selling out the Union to sectionalism at Niagara after his plan of campaign was rejected, and an exalted consistency in plugging the proceeds of an abolition journal to bailing Mr. Davis, the head of the slave hierarchy, we have no language left to express the gratitude of western men in being denominated "border ruffians" for protecting themselves from hordes of savages aided, abetted and comforted by their editorial, legislative, agent, contractor and commission allies who wear civilian costume. Here are H. G.'s comments: After the many furious denunciations which have come to us from the border settlers of the distilleries of Gen. Sherman, the delay of the army and the War Department in the good work of killing off and utterly exterminating the ferocious and treacherous Indians of the Plains, it is refreshing to be assured by the authoritative report of the Indian Commission that the war resulted entirely from a violation by us of our own treaties, by the occupation of grounds which did not belong to us but to their Indian defenders. Though numbers were on our side, justice was all on the side of those whom we compelled to be our enemies. As several hundred instances of the same kind are scattered very thickly along the bloody pathway of our nation's history, we would do well hereafter to scrutinize all border-ruffian reports of Indian outrages, and by hunting the case before we decide it, avoid involving our own race in "white atrocities."—N. Y. Tribune.

The Commission, in reciting their authority, give the following objects they were instructed to accomplish: First: To remove, if possible, the cause of war.

Second: To secure as far as practicable, our frontier settlements, and the safe building of the railroad looking to the Pacific.

Third: To suggest or inaugurate some plan for the civilization of these Indians.

They then give an account of the organization of the Commission and their perilous trip on the Missouri to Cheyenne river, and thence returning, taking the U. P. R. to North Platte, involving, in their ramblings, an expenditure of nearly half a million dollars, where they "inaugurated the system" of conquering the Indians by kindness, and the "ignorant and corrupt" people of the West "criticized" them "very severely."

To give one of these Indians powder and ball is to give him death. To refuse it, in his judgment, does him starvation, and more than this, he looks upon the refusal, especially after a profession of friendship on his part, as an insult upon his trustfulness and fidelity. If an Indian is to be trusted at all, he must be trusted to the full extent of his word. If you betray symptoms of distrust, he discovers it with nature's intuition, and at once abandons the friendship which would bind friendship and suspicion together. Whatever our people may choose to say of the insincerity or duplicity of the Indian, it would fail to expose the estimate entertained by many Indians of the white man's character in this respect. Promises have been made to the Indians, which they usually come in contact; cupidity has so long piled its work, deaf to their cries of suffering, and heartless cruelty has so frequently sought them in the path of charity, that to obtain their confidence, our promises must be scrupulously fulfilled, and our professions of friendship must be accompanied by all appearance of selflessness and duplicity.

We are now satisfied, whatever the criticisms on our conduct at the time, and they were very severe, both by the ignorant and corrupt, that had we refused the ammunition demanded at this council, the war on their part would have continued, and possibly ere this have resulted in great loss of life and property. From thence they returned to Fort Laramie, where they were honored by Red Cloud, not by his presence, but by the following message: He sent us word, however, that his war against us, whites, was to save the valley of the Powder River, the only hunting ground left to his nation from our intrusion. He assured us that whenever the military garrisons at Forts Phil Kearney and C. F. Smith were withdrawn, the war, on his part, would cease. As we could not then, for several reasons, make any such agreement, and as the garrisons could not have been easily removed to late in the season, the Commission adjourned to meet in Washington on the 9th day of December.

Since arriving here, we are gratified to be informed that Red Cloud has accepted our proposition to discontinue hostilities, and meet us in council next Spring or Summer. And now, with anything like prudence and good conduct on the part of our own people in future, we believe the Indian war east of the Rocky Mountains is substantially closed. The Commissioners next give a detailed account of the Sand Creek affair, in which the entire blame of the war is laid upon Colonel Chivington and his subordinates, but not so much as an allusion is made to the fact that for the six months preceding, Denver was actually cut off from all communication with the east and virtually in a state of siege by hostile Indians. In the face of the fact that the Sand Creek battle put a quietus on Indian hostilities, they say: To those who reflect on the subject, knowing the facts, the war was something more than useless and expensive, it was disgraceful to the nation, and disgraceful to those who had originated it. When the utter futility of conquering a peace was made manifest to every one, and the true cause of the war began to be developed, the country demanded that peaceful agencies should be resorted to.

In one instance of the barbarities of last year, after giving an account of that attempt by the Indians to kill a Major

and two traders, one of whom escaped after being shot at, they remark parenthetically that the failure to kill him "may be regarded as a great misfortune." General Hancock by the burning of the Cheyenne village is declared to have made the Indians outlaws, and the blame is only partially lifted from his shoulders to place it upon that of the Cabinet. The following history of affairs on the Bozeman route we give entire. The Commissioners fall here to record the fact that the Indian butcheries on the route began immediately after the Laramie Council commencing on June 18, 1866, and several weeks before either Fort Phil. Kearney or C. F. Smith was established:

A few words only can be given to the origin of the Powder River war. This is partly in that it occurred to the Sioux, by the treaty of 1851. The Sioux have gradually driven the Gros Ventres back upon the head waters of the Yellowstone, in Montana, and have conquered almost the entire country traversed by the Powder River route to Montana. It will be recollected that the Gros Ventres ceased to be cooperative in 1866. The annuities had been distributed, or rather appropriated therefor had been made, for the last five years of the term, under the amendment of the Senate, heretofore referred to. The Indians were apprised, of course, that after that year they must look to their own exertions for subsistence, since 1851 they had seen Colorado settled on the south and Montana rapidly filling up to the North, leaving them no valuable hunting grounds of their ancient domain, excepting along the Powder River and other tributaries of the Yellowstone. While the luxurious growth of grass in the region made it desirable as a hunting ground, it also made it tempting to the gold hunter as a route to the new mines of Montana.

These Indians have never founded the title to their lands upon the treaty of 1851. They have looked upon that treaty as a mere acknowledgment of a previously existing right in themselves. The assignment of boundaries, they supposed, was merely to fix rights among the tribes—to make certain what was uncertain before.

It is true that by said treaty they "recognized" the right of the United States to establish roads and military posts. But it is equally true that, in lieu of this privilege, the United States was to pay them \$20,000 per annum for fifty years. The Senate reduced the term to ten years, and the Indians never having ratified the amendment, they have some rights to claim when the annuities are stopped, at the end of fifteen years, a release from their obligations in this behalf.

The proper plan would have been to show some respect to their claims, call them pretensions if you please, as also some regard for their wants by paying into some relation with them. This however was not done.

The Indian who had stood by and seen the stream of population pouring over his land to California, Utah, Oregon and Montana, for so many years, began now, when thrown back by the Government upon his own resources, to look some place where he might be secure from intrusion. But just at this moment the war of the Rebellion being over, thousands turned their faces toward the treasure of Montana.

The stories in regard to its mines eclipsed those fabulous tales that frenzied the Spaniards in Mexico. The Indian was forgotten. His rights were lost sight of in the general rush to these fountains of wealth. It seemed not to occur to any one that this poor, dependent and weak man was the original discoverer, and the sole occupant for many centuries, of every mountain summit with quartz, and of every stream whose yellow sands glistened in the moon-day sun. These mountains and streams, where gold is found, had all been taken from him. He asked to retain only a social spot where he could hunt and fish, and would live, and that spot he would make his home.

This could not be granted him. It lay on the way to these quartz mountains and Indian streams. The truth is, no place was left for him. Every inch of the land "belongs to the white man, and we are the white man." On the 10th of March, 1866, Gen. Pope, then commanding the Department of the Missouri, issued an order to establish military posts "near the base of the Big Horn Mountains," and "on or near the upper Yellow Stone," the new route to Montana. On the 23d of June orders were issued from Headquarters Department of the Platte, directing a part of the 18th Infantry to garrison Fort Reno, Phil. Kearney and C. F. Smith. Col. Carrington was placed in command of all army organization, called the "Mountain District."

Phil. Kearney was established July 15, and C. F. Smith Aug. 3. The Indians notified the troops of the occupation of their country would be resisted. The warning was unheeded.

An attempt was made by the Interior Department during that summer to stop the war by negotiation. The Indians in council demanded the evacuation of their country before treating. This could not be granted, because the civil and military departments, our government, cannot, or will not, understand each other.

Some of the chiefs reluctantly submitted to sign a treaty, but Red Cloud retired from the Council, placing his hand upon his rifle and saying: "In this and the Great Spirit I trust for the right."

In a few weeks the fire of war blazed along the entire length of this new route. So far from securing the emigrant's travel, the forts themselves were besieged. The mountains swarmed with Indian warriors. The valleys seemed to be covered by them. Wood and hay were only procured at the end of a battle. Matters grew worse until the 21st of December, when a wool party being attacked, and reinforcements under Lieut. Col. Fetterman were sent out, and a fight ensued in which every man of our forces was killed. This is called the massacre of Ft. Phil Kearney.

As we have already stated, the Indians demanded the surrender of this country to them. But they have agreed to suspend hostilities and meet Commissioners next Spring to treat of their alleged rights, without insisting upon the previous withdrawal of the garrisons. Whether they will then insist upon the abandonment of the route we cannot say. Of one thing we are satisfied, that so long as war lasts the road is utterly useless to emigrants. It is worse than this; it renders other routes insecure and endangers territorial settlements. It is said that a road to Montana, leaving the Pacific Railroad further west, and passing down the valley west of the Big Horn Mountains, is preferable to the present route. The Indians present no objection to such a road, but assure us that we may travel it in peace. If it is said that these savages are unreasonable, we answer that if civilized they might be reasonable. At least they would not be dependent on the buffalo and elk. They would no longer want a country exclusively for game, and the presence of the white man would become desirable. If it is said that because they are savages they should be exterminated, we answer that since from the inhumanity of the suggestions, it will prove exceedingly difficult, and if money considerations are permitted to weigh, it costs less to civilize than to kill.

To wait for this "talk" will be equivalent to the abandonment of that route another year. The Bozeman route is

the best and shortest from Montana to the lower river. General Sherman, whose name is signed to this report, issued an order in April or May, 1866, guaranteeing protection over it. That guarantee was never fulfilled. The military posts are little else than useless encumbrances, and so far have been a virtual prohibition to emigration. Let them be removed, if thought desirable, but give emigrants permission to protect themselves and they will come through unscathed. The Indians claim it for hunting grounds. What injury to them is the use of that road four months in the year? Emigrants never go ten miles from the trail, and the two or three trains a week would not disturb their game half as much in a whole season as a dozen vernalized aborigines in an afternoon. We hold this to be a self-evident truth that no legislation or savage warfare can prevent the pioneers of the west from exploring and occupying any portion of this great country. It is ours by the law of progressive civilization, and if the Indians are disposed to play dog in the manger they will be gored by the ox. There is room enough for them and for us. The lands which are useless to them, contain the richest minerals of the world, the possession of which by the Anglo-Saxon cannot be else than a question of time. The valleys whose soil yields golden harvests at the touch of the plowshare, are made to give their return to industry, and the sooner legislation conforms itself to these inevitable results the better it will be for all.

After paying the highest tribute to the character of the Indians, in contrast with the viciousness, degeneracy and cruelty of the whites, they propose fat offices and contracts for a few hundred of their favorites:

But one thing remains to be done with honor to the nation, and that is to select a district or districts of country, as indicated by Congress on which all the tribes east of the Rocky Mountains may be gathered. For each district let a territorial government be established, with power according to the agreement. The Governor should be a man of unquestioned integrity and purity of character. He should be paid salary as to place him there temptingly, and authorized to employ force should he be unable to keep the peace. Agents with small civil courts should be introduced among them as rapidly as possible. Schools should be established, which the barbarous dialects should be blotted out, and the English language substituted. Congress may from time to time establish courts and other institutions of government within the jurisdiction of the people. At first it may be strong military government. Let it be so, if thought proper, and let offenders be tried by military law until a better government is a better purpose. Let farmers and mechanics, millers and engineers be employed and sent among them for purposes of instruction. Then let us have our best school societies and missionary associations to this field of philanthropy nearer home. The objects of civilization, we would recommend, should be the province of the people, the Indians—to blot out the boundary lines which divide them into distinct nations, and fuse them in a one common people, we would recommend, would do this. Nothing else will. As the work advances, each head of a family should be encouraged to select and improve a homestead. Let the women be taught to weave, to sew, and to knit. Let polygamy be punished. Encourage the building of dwellings, and the growing of those of those comforts which endear the home.

If Congress should adopt these suggestions, the only question remaining is, whether there shall be one or two territories. Under all the circumstances, we would recommend the creation of two, and locate them as follows: 1st.—The territory bounded north by Kansas, east by Arkansas and Missouri, south by Texas, and west by the 100th of 101st meridian. In this territory, the Cheyennes, Creeks, Choctaws, and other of the civilized tribes already reside. In prospect, others might gradually be brought in, and, in course of a few years, we might safely calculate on concentrating there the following tribes, to wit:

Table with 2 columns: Tribe Name and Present Population. Includes Cherokee, Creek, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminole, Osage, Chickasaw (various tribes), Kiowas and Comanches, Cheyennes, Apaches, Pottowatomies, Kansas Indians, Navajos of New-Mexico, and Total (36,435).

The Second District might be located as follows, viz:—The territory bounded north by the 46th parallel, east by the Missouri River, south by Nebraska, and west by the 101st meridian. If the hostile Sioux cannot be induced to remove from Powder River, a hunting privilege may be extended to them for a time, while the nucleus of settlement may be forming on the Missouri, the White Earth or Cheyenne River. To prevent war if insisted on by the Sioux, the western boundary might be extended to the 106th or even to the 107th meridian for the present.

Table with 2 columns: Tribe Name and Present Population. Includes Yantoc Sioux, Fancos, Lower Brules, Lower Yantoc, Two Kettles, Blackfeet, Minnecoyons, Unquas, Ogillias, Upper Yantoc, Gros Ventres, Arickaroes, Gros Ventres, Assiniboues, Flatheads, Upper Pond d'Oreilles, Kootenays, Blackfeet, Piegans, Bloods, Gros Ventres, Creeks, Winnebagoes, Omaha, Brule & Ogillias Sioux, Northern Cheyennes, Northern Arapahoes, and Total (54,128).

The Commission further recommends: First.—That the jurisdiction over the Indians be divided between the Interior and War Departments.

Second.—The War Department to have charge of the hostile tribes; the Civil Department to have charge of the peaceful tribes.

Third.—That Congress pass an act fixing a day not later than the first of February, 1869, when the offices of all superintendents, agents, and special agents shall be vacated. Such persons as have proved themselves competent and faithful may be reappointed.

Fourth.—The establishment of an independent Indian Bureau.

Fifth.—We cannot close this report without alluding to another matter calling for the special attention of Congress. Governors of Territories are now "ex officio" superintendents of Indian affairs within their respective jurisdictions. The settlements in new Territories are generally made on Indian lands, before the extinguishment of the Indian title. If difficult cases arise between the whites and Indians, the Governor too frequently neglects the rights of the red man, and yields to the demands of those who have votes to promote his political aspirations in the organization of the forthcoming State. Let any Acting-Governor may suppose himself alluded to in this case, or suggestions are adopted in regard to the organization of a new Territory. We might cite instances of gross outrages in the past, but we prefer to base our recommendation upon general principles which can be readily applied to any connection we deem it of the highest importance.

Sixth.—No Governor of Legislature of State or Territory be permitted to call out and equip troops for the purpose of carrying on war against Indians. It was the Colorado troops that involved us in the war of 1864-5, with the Cheyennes, and it was a regiment of one-hundred-day men that perpetrated the butchery at Sand Creek, and took from the treasury millions of money. A regular force of Montana troops last September have involved us in an almost interminable war with the Gros Ventres for the intrusion of the Cheyennes, who are generally actuated by the loftiest principles of humanity. The Commission should be organized to respect the rules of civilized warfare.

Seventh.—The enactment of a law prescribing conditions to be observed by all reports in the Territory to inspect and report to him on Indian affairs from time to time.

Eighth.—A new commission should be appointed to investigate the claims of the Sioux against the Government, and to arrange with the Navajos for their removal. It might be established, in case our suggestions are adopted in regard to selecting Indian reservations to divide the powers of the commission so as to have one to conclude treaties or agreements with tribes, and another to be holding their concentration upon the reservations indicated.

In the course of a short time the Union Pacific Railroad will have reached the country claimed by the Snakes, Bannocks, and other tribes; and in order to preserve peace with these the Commission should be required to see them, and make satisfactory arrangements.

To this report are signed the names of N. G. Taylor, President; J. B. Henderson, W. T. Sherman, Lieutenant-General; W. S. Harney, Brevet Major-General; John B. Sanderson; Alfred H. Terry, Brevet Major-General; S. F. Tappan; C. C. Augar, Brevet Major-General, Commissioners. To say that all features of the report are objectionable would be a sweeping assertion, yet founded upon the theory that the whites have been unexceptionally the aggressors; magnifying every rumor against us; elaborating and distorting every instance where their batteries were rewarded with chastisement and studiedly avoiding, in every possible instance, their deeds of damning iniquity that led to retaliation, the report reads more like an emanation from Red Cloud than from officers of the United States government. If we except the puff they give themselves in the sixth suggestion, the Montana militia never made an aggressive movement except to carry food to the beleaguered garrison of Fort Smith; to rescue three men surrounded and crippled by savages, or to procure the dead bodies of those they had slain. If the Executives of Territories in case of hostilities, have not authority to call out and organize their citizens in self-defense, depend upon it, they will impulsively obey the first law of nature and it will not increase the number of Indians. We represent 30,000,000 people, they 300,000. We progress, industry, civilization, enlightenment; they represent slothful, lazy, nomadic barbarism. What has been the history of the past will be the history of the future. The white man explores, develops, tills, builds, the red man, crafty, treacherous, and revengeful, steals from forest or plain, slays, burns, and tortures, and sooner or later the retributive hand is laid upon him. They are driven to other lands, or completely conquered and thinned in numbers, occasional bands adopt the customs of the whites, and year after year their numbers diminishing by vice and disease, they fade out of existence and recollection and the earth knows them no more. These schemes for civilizing and christianizing them, if effected, entail the inevitable consequence of a speedy extermination of the Indians and enormous expenditures to the government. The best suggestion made by the Commissioners is the vacation of all offices among the Indians. Let them remain vacant, make no more treaties, have no more Commissioners. Let their reservation be wherever they may follow their game, and our limits wherever our steps may tend. Their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness should be guaranteed as merely as ours; the penalty of furnishing them with arms or ammunition should be the same awarded to those who have. This we think, would include all the legislation necessary to solve the Indian question.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

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WAREHOUSE! Secure from Fire. Ware, Ellis & Co. 70 MAIN ST., HELENA. Notice.

During my absence from Montana, Mr. P. A. Langey, of the firm of E. Crichton & Co., Virginia City, is authorized to transact all of my business. JAMES H. GAMBLE, Attorney at Law, Virginia City, Jan. 7, 1868.

NOTICE. I AM closing up the business of JOHN HOWE in Virginia City, and according to instructions accounts unpaid on the 1st of January, 1868, will be placed in the hands of an attorney for collection. F. C. DEMLING, decl'd w4w1m.

NOTICE. JAMES P. ISAACS is no longer connected with the mill, mining property or business of McAndrew, Wann & Co. The undersigned alone is authorized to make contracts in their name in Montana. By order of McAndrew & Wann, JAMES H. GAMBLE, Representative.

NOTICE. To whom it may concern: MR. Wm. D. Wann has just arrived from New York and is the duly accredited Agent of McAndrew, Wann & Co., authorized by a full power of attorney to transact all their business in this Territory. No contracts made in their name after this date by any other person will be of any validity whatever. JAMES H. GAMBLE, Representative, Virginia City, Montana, January 20, 1868.

NOTICE of Co-partnership. NOTICE is hereby given that the co-partnership heretofore existing between H. C. Harrison and Horace Countryman, under the firm name of Harrison & Countryman, in this day dissolved. Horace Countryman withdrawing from the said firm. HORACE COUNTRYMAN, Virginia City, January 20, 1868.