

WALKER RIVER INDIAN RESERVE

August 30, 1868

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following annual report of the Indian affairs of this reserve.

On the 5th of July, 1867, a white man named Dye was killed in the Como mountains, about 30 miles west of this agency. The deed was charged to a band of Walker River Pi-Utes that were camped in the vicinity.

The day before this occurrence an Indian, named Truckee John, was killed on Truckee river by two drunken white men; and two Carson Lake Pi-Utes were badly wounded on the road 10 miles east of Virginia City by the same men. Much excitement was caused by these outrages among both whites and Indians. On Truckee river the settlers left their farms and concentrated for defence.

I reached their encampment on the 8th, and the next day had an interview with the Indians and found they entertained no idea of retaliating upon the whites for the murder of Truckee John, but were, on the contrary, as badly frightened as the whites.

The alarm was created by false stories put in circulation by persons who no doubt wished to bring on a collision with the Indians.

Returning I arrived at Fort Churchill on the 11th, where I met Gov. Blasdell and a large number of Walker River Pi_Utes, whom the governor had assembled during my absence at Truckee for the purpose of ferreting out the murderers of Dye.

The governor seemed strongly impressed with the belief that these Indians had committed the murder, while I, judging from the circumstances, took the opposite view. It is not probable they would commit an act of that kind near their own camps, while 200 woodmen were working in the mountains

about.

Finding that no information could be gained concerning the perpetrators of the deed, the governor then offered the Indians a reward of \$300 for the delivery of the murderers into the hands of the sheriff of Lyon county. Since then I have improved every opportunity to investigate the case, and believe there is but little doubt that Dye was killed by Washoe Indians, for the purpose of getting the Walker River Pi-Utes into trouble.

On the evening of the 5th of August last, two Walker River Pi-Utes, Sam and Jim, who had been under arrest for more than two years for the murder of Stuart and Rabe, (spoken in my annual report for 1866,) made their escape for the third time from the guard-house at Fort Churchill. An unsuccessful effort was made by the military to retake them. Having had great trouble arresting these two Indians on three different occasions, I felt inclined to pursue a conciliatory policy with them, hoping that they had become reformed and would give no further trouble. Up to the present time this hope, so far as Sam is concerned, is fully realized. Jim had a large number of relatives who have always been the most intractable Indians connected with this reserve. Among their number were his two brothers, who were equally as bad as himself, they having after the arrest of Jim killed an Indian on the ground that he was the first to inform of the murder.

This band, acting as a unit, were a terror to the balance of the tribe, among whom there is no responsible head or leader; consequently no concert of action.

Soon after Jim got among his friends, who were camped in the mountains 60 miles south of this agency, they commenced to tyrannize over Indians that had always been friendly towards the whites. Two horses were stolen from an American by Jim, and continual threats were made by the band that they would commit acts that would bring about hostilities between the

Americans and Indians, in which case the latter would be forced to become their friends.

The citizens of Aurora and East Walker river, learning of the locality and threats of this band, warned the Indians generally, that upon the least provocation an onslaught would be made against them.

Owing to this threatening state of affairs, many Indians who had gathered pine-nuts in the vicinity of the renegade band and prepared to remain during the winter were frightened off, having to leave behind the principal part of their winter's stores of food, which were generally destroyed by the hostile Indians.

Scarcely a day passed without Indians coming to me with complaints of this band, and the request was unanimous that measures should be taken to quell them, in order that further and more serious trouble might be averted.

Upon consultation with the commanding officers at Fort Churchill, it was deemed best that Jim and his two brothers be captured and confined to that post. Accordingly, on the 13th of December last, I left the fort with eight cavalry men. At this reserve we were joined by 15 Pi-Ute warriors. We then travelled nights, and after making 75 miles through a rough mountainous country, arrived in the vicinity of the hostile camps. Here we divided into three parties for the purpose of visiting several camps simultaneously. Jim and his two brothers were surprised and captured by the party that I was with, but made their escape a few moments afterwards, and before the other parties came up. Their running was so unexpected that they had disappeared in the timber before the soldiers and Indians commenced pursuit, which lasted about an hour, and resulted in the killing of the three brothers. Since then the balance of the band have conducted themselves properly, and are now camped on the reserve near this agency.

The general behavior of the Walker River Pi-Utes for the

year past has been an improvement on that of any previous one since my connection with Indian affairs.

Much sickness has prevailed among these Indians during the year past. According to the record kept by R. A. Washington, interpreter, between 75 and 100 deaths occurred in the months of August, September, and October.

The prevailing diseases were ague, bilious and typhoid fevers, which, no doubt, were engendered by the extreme heat of the season, the long and continued overflow of the river, and their filthy habits.

The issuing of a few boxes of soap at the commencement of the hot season would, no doubt, prove an excellent sanitary measure.

Many of the afflicted camps were unable to remove to the pine-nut country in season to secure a sufficient supply of food for the winter. These located themselves in the vicinity of Virginia City, where they were able to earn their living by doing light jobs of work.

This spring the measles broke out among them and caused the death of about 25 of their number, mostly children. In June this disease became prevalent among the Indians upon this reserve. Having anticipated its appearance, I had procured in advance a considerable amount of medicine from Dr. Hiller's homeopathic dispensary, Virginia City, which I administered with good success. Out of 83 cases but two proved fatal.

The garden planted by R.A. Washington, the interpreter, at this agency last year was destroyed by water. I planted the same ground this season with the same result.

The agency house has been since May, and will be until October next on a small island, with no way of getting to or from it except by wading through water and mire for a distance of 200 yards.

In consequence, of the locality being very unhealthy and

infested with countless myriads of mosquitos, I have camped most of the time during the summer on the lake shore.

The cause of this high water is the melting of the vast amount of snow that accumulated in the Sierra Nevada during the winter. All the agricultural land of this reserve, excepting 1,000 acres near the lake is now under water, or so wet as to be unfit for farming purposes, and was so last summer and during the season of 1862.

Last spring a mining district was formed to the west of the lake and within the limits of this reserve. The lodes are numerous and contain gold, silver, copper and lead. Several companies are not engaged prospecting them for the purpose of testing their permanency and wealth.

The act of organizing the Territory of Nevada provides that established Indian reservations shall form no part of the Territory until the Indians express a willingness to the President of the United States that they should. This the Indians have never done.

The present size of the Walker river Indian reserve, containing, as it does, about 600 square miles, is both unnecessary and undesirable. I would recommend that it be reduced to 40 square miles, 10 miles long by four wide, to include a small portion of the lake that is used by the Indians for fishing purposes, and to extend up the river from its mouth 10 miles. The reserve so reduced would embrace all that is desirable about the present one, containing, as it would, 1000 acres agricultural land, 500 acres hay land, a considerable body of cottonwood timber, and the valuable fishery at the mouth of the river. It should then be secured to the Indians for all time to come, and never form a part of the State, which is necessary in order that the Indians may be shielded from the State law prohibiting the catching of fish at certain seasons of the year. The abandoned portion would comprise the mineral lands and

a large amount of territory that will never be of any value, excepting about 2000 acres which is subject to overflow, and consequently unreliable for farming purposes.

The experience of the past two years has wholly reversed my opinion of the practicability of farming to any considerable extent with these Indians. The frosts, floods, drouths, and alkalies all tend to make it a very uncertain business. There are many farms in this State that were once considered valuable, which are now either abandoned or can be purchased for much less than improvements cost.

Owing to the character of this country the necessity for domesticating the Indians is not urgent nor never will be. Seventy-five percent of our white population live in towns located in the vicinity of mines and import nearly everything they use. The agricultural land in this State does not amount to more than one acre in 300, consequently there are immense tracts of territory over which the Indians can roam and procure from it whatever subsistence they ever have done heretofore without interfering with the rights of any one. Each year there is a noticeable change for the better among these people, while the number of those that are gaining a livelihood by work are continually increasing.

Horse stealing and cattle killing have become very rare occurrences. They still adhere to their correct principles of morality and temperance.

Ways and means should be extended to this agency for the prompt alleviation of suffering. During the sickly period last fall I was compelled to turn a deaf ear to many urgent calls for assistance. The Indians believed the sickness to be contagious, and as it increased moved in small camps to isolated places. There were instances where nearly every member of a camp sickened and died, oftentimes leaving small children to perish of hunger and thirst. In cases of this kind that came to my

notice I prevailed upon the relatives to take the children in charge. In many cases the well ones were unable to furnish proper and sufficient subsistence for the sick. I did all that was possible under the circumstances to assist them. Many of the particulars of this unfortunate event were unknown to me until weeks afterwards. I felt that it would be a mockery to go about empty handed searching for objects of charity.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANKLIN CAMPBELL,

United States Indian Agent.

HON. H. G. PARKER

Sup't Indian Affairs, Carson City, Nevada
