

CARSON CITY, NEVADA, September 18, 1865.

DEAR SIR: Being at Virginia City on the 16th instant I met J. R. Lovejoy, esq., and in a casual conversation with him he informed me that he had just discovered that the timber reservation on the Truckee river was actually and permanently located for a government reservation, and said, further, that he had been engaged in taking care of that property for the government; that he had kept intruders off of it, &c.

Mr. Lovejoy informed me that his business then in Virginia City was to meet some gentlemen with whom he had arranged to advance the money to pay for "half-breed Indian land scrip" to cover 5,000 acres of said timber reservation; that he had just engaged the scrip at Carson City, but having learned since his arrival in Virginia City that the said timber reservation was to be continued as a government reserve, he did not intend to locate said scrip, as it would be useless to do so. I then saw him in conversation with Mr. Leek, the gentleman whom it was said purchased the aforesaid timber lot and saw-mill of Clark Thompson, esq. Senator Nye and one or two other gentlemen, with whom I had not the honor of an acquaintance, were engaged in the conversation last mentioned.

This half-breed scrip, as you know, was issued to half-breed Indians by the government in lieu of some reservations which were abolished. It is not transferable, the intention of Congress being to secure the land for the use of the half-breed Indians in whose favor it was issued.

This scrip has been extensively used in this State by settlers and others to secure title to lands where they claimed more than one hundred and sixty acres, or for some other reason were unable to pre-empt. It sells for about five dollars per acre, and is located in the name of the Indian by an agent acting under the authority of a power of attorney from him. When the location is confirmed at Washington, the agent conveys by deed the title from the Indian to the settler or purchaser of the scrip.

I drop you this hasty letter not knowing whether the information will be of any use to you. My only motive is a desire to assist in protecting the interest of the government, which I fear has been, and is still likely to be further abused in connexion with this timber reservation.

You are at liberty to make any use you please of this letter. However, if the information is of no consequence to you, please destroy it, as I do not desire the animosity of those parties unnecessarily.

Very respectfully,

WARREN WASSON.

HON. WILLIAM HIGBY,  
San Francisco, California.

CARSON CITY, NEVADA, September 11, 1865.

DEAR SIR: Your communication of the 7th instant, requesting such information as I possess in regard to Indian affairs, past and present, in this State, together with suggestions as to the best policy to be pursued towards these Indians in the future, is before me. In compliance therewith, I respectfully submit the following statement of facts and suggestions:

In the summer of A. D. 1858 Frederick Dodge, esq., Indian agent for the Carson Valley agency, comprising the western portion of Utah Territory, now the State of Nevada, arrived and entered upon the discharge of his duties. I made his acquaintance early in the spring of 1859 at my ranch in Long valley, a tributary of Honey Lake. My nearest white neighbor at that time on this side of the Sierras was forty (40) miles distant. Both the Washoe and Pah-Ute tribes made my place a sort of council rendezvous, it being near the line of their respective Territories, and my acquaintance and standing among them enabled me to be of great service to Mr. Dodge.

In the summer of 1859 the whites in considerable numbers moved into Long valley; I sold my improvements to them and moved to Carson valley, settling upon the land now owned by me.

The first year of Mr. Dodge's administration was spent in visiting the various Indian camps within his agency, issuing hickory shirts, overalls, tobacco, &c., to them as presents, and in viewing the country for the purpose of recommending proper situations for two reservations in accordance with instructions from the department. From various localities described by Mr. Dodge the department selected and caused to be set apart two reservations described as follows: one on the Truckee river, commencing at a point one (1) mile above the Tower crossing or great bend of the Truckee, and extending down the river to and including the lake of the same, (Pyramid Lake,) and embracing the lands contiguous on each side of the river and lake; the other on Walker river, commencing at the great bend, about twenty-five (25) miles above the lake (Walker), and running down to and including the same, and embracing the contiguous land on both sides of the river and lake. The external boundaries of these reservations have since been established by official survey, under the authority of the department. In my estimation, the amount of arable land embraced within both reservations will not, in the aggregate, exceed ten thousand (10,000) acres, the most of which is within the one on the Truckee. The Truckee reservation contains an abundance of good timber, sufficient for all its necessities. The Walker reservation has very little timber, and but little land suitable for cultivation.

During the year above mentioned Dodge expended out of his own private funds about five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for an outfit, consisting of four mules, harness for same, carriage, or ambulance as he termed it, pack-saddles, presents for the Indians, provisions, and pay of employes. Dodge made requisition for that amount on Jacob Forney, esq., then superintendent of Indian affairs for Utah Territory, but who put him off from time to time with promises to send the amount soon, but which he did not do. Dodge's private funds being exhausted, never having had any public ones, he could do no good by remaining; he therefore went to Salt Lake to see Forney, who refused him an interview, but wrote him a note instructing him to return to his agency, and funds would be furnished him at the earliest convenience of Mr. Forney. Dodge being indignant, forced his way into Forney's private apartment and gave him a sound thrashing, compelling him to furnish a draft on St. Louis for the amount, but which, when sent there, was protested, Forney having overdrawn that year's appropriation for the Indian service in Utah. In the mean time Dodge returned to his agency, expecting in due time the funds from St. Louis, but which did not come. He then visited Washington and tendered his resignation, which was not accepted; the Commissioner, A. B. Greenwood, though, reimbursed him, and relieved his agency from the supervision of the superintendent of Utah, authorizing him to report direct to Washington.

In June, 1860, Dodge returned to Carson valley and found a bloody war in full blast between the whites and his Indians, inaugurated by some villanous whites who stole some ponies of the Pah-Utes, and who tied up and whipped one or two Indians, (so the Indians said,) who retaliated by murdering four white men found at the place where these outrages had been committed.

About the tenth (10th) of May, 1860, some hundred or more settlers, hastily armed and organized, proceeded to the Truckee reservation for the purpose of chastising the Indians, which resulted in a shameful defeat of the whites, who left sixty or eighty (60 or 80) of their number upon the field slain, and their horses, arms, and effects in the hands of the Indians, greatly encouraging them. Two hundred United States soldiers were then sent from California, who, being joined by citizens of this then Territory, and of the adjoining counties of California, formed an expedition numbering about eight hundred (800) men, proceeded against the Indians about the first of June. The Indians made but a feeble resistance on the open field, losing about seven or eight of their number, and killing about the same number of the whites, when they fled to their strongholds in the mountains, pursued by about two hundred (200) mounted volunteers, without effect, who lost one man and then returned to the main force. The citizens then disbanded and returned to their homes, leaving the soldiers in the field, who did not again engage the Indians, but proceeded to the Carson river and established Fort Churchill.

Michael Bushey, a mountaineer of much experience, was engaged as guide and scout for the expedition, but was killed by the Indians the first time he left the command; I was employed in his place, and was thus engaged when Dodge arrived. I suggested to Dodge the importance of an immediate interview with the hostile Indians, and volunteered to go into the mountains and bring them to the Truckee reservation, and which I did by his authority, and he then and there concluded a settlement of the existing difficulties upon the basis of forgetting the past and doing right in the future. The Indians complained of many outrages, doubtless committed by lawless vagabond whites, and in turn acknowledged doing many things themselves not consistent with our ideas of right.

Under the impression that my services were indispensable to the success of this arrangement, on account of my experience among the Indians and my personal acquaintance with and influence over the principal chiefs of the Pah-Utes, Mr. Dodge induced me to engage in his service, at a compensation of \$125 per month and my expenses paid, until peace and quiet was restored among them.

The Pah-Utes inhabiting the country south of the Carson river, including those on the Walker reservation, did not participate in or approve of the war, except a few of the restless and ambitious young men; and for this reason Dodge built the first house on the Walker reservation, intending at the time to build more extensively upon the Truckee as soon as he should be satisfied that the Truckee Indians would not renew the war. From the time of his arrival in June, up to September 1, 1860, Mr. Dodge expended about five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in the erection of the outside part of a house on the Walker reservation, provisions, presents for Indians, pay of employes, &c., which exhausted the funds furnished him by the Commissioner.

In order to set forth to the department the condition and necessities of his agency more fully than could be done by writing, he left for Washington about the first of September, 1860, taking my receipt for the government property, and leaving me in full charge of the agency.

No outbreak of any serious character occurred among the Indians while I had charge of the agency, although on several occasions it required my utmost exertions to prevent them from resenting the almost daily outrages committed upon them by white men—several of their men being shot down in cold blood for no cause except that they were Pah-Utes. Many of their horses were stolen, and other outrages too revolting to commit to paper were perpetrated upon them.

About the middle of April, 1861, some two-thirds of the fighting strength of the Pah-Utes assembled at Walker lake, headed by Wa-hee, (Fox,) second war chief of the tribe, instigated by some disloyal white men, and entered into a conspiracy to begin a general onslaught by killing me and all connected with the agency. Their plot was kept a profound secret, but relatives of my interpreter (an Indian) informing him, he fled without warning me; his flight, however, alarmed me, and by intimidation I compelled a young Indian to divulge the secret. My teamster being absent for provisions, I could not leave the reservation to inform the officers at Fort Churchill without jeopardizing the safety of the property; therefore, prompt action on my part was necessary. I succeeded in frightening Wa-hee so that he fled to Oregon, and induced the other Indians to abandon their bloodthirsty project, and return the interpreter and the government horse and saddle he had taken with him. Wa-hee returned in April, 1862, and was killed by his own people, about the first of May, for the horrible outrages committed by him.

Settlers settled upon the upper end of the Truckee reservation in the fall of 1860, built log cabins, fenced and ploughed some ground. I warned them to leave, which they did immediately, but returned again in the summer of 1861, and were not removed, but are, I believe, still occupying the land.

I had great difficulty during my administration of affairs to prevent whites from settling upon the reservations, and stock men from herding stock on them, to the destruction of the grass seeds one of the principal sources of subsistence of the Indians; also to prevent traders and fishermen from depriving them of their winter's supply of fish by cheating them out of it entirely.

From September 1, 1860, to March 31, 1861, I expended about three thousand (3,000) dollars, improving the Walker reservation, for presents to the Indians, provisions, pay of an interpreter, and one teamster, and my own compensation. I erected a valuable and permanent adobe building, 14 by 30 feet, finished off the house commenced by Dodge, made a small garden mainly for the purpose of testing the soil and climate for future farming purposes, and calico, costing, &c. The presents to the Indians consisted of hickory shirts, overalls, and calico, costing on the average \$1 50 to clothe each Indian in a manner of which they were proud, and was really useful to them. Tobacco was dealt out to the chiefs in small quantities on all occasions.

Mr. Dodge furnished the means to settle up to the above date, but did not return in the spring of 1861, as he intended doing when he left, but resigning the office of Indian agent, was appointed to a lieutenantancy in the regular army, and was killed on the Mississippi river during the war.

I may here as well state that, from actual personal knowledge of Mr. Dodge, I know he was scrupulously honest and zealous in the discharge of his duties, but unacquainted with Indian character, and, therefore, unfit for the position of Indian agent.

From the establishment of the agency up to March 31, 1861, the expenses as above stated were about thirteen thousand dollars, (\$13,000,) while the property, including the improvements upon the reservations, was worth about four thousand (4,000) dollars.

No appropriation by Congress had ever been made for this agency, and the above amount was paid by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs out of the contingent fund, as I was informed.

During the quarter ending June 30, 1861, the expenses, exclusive of the pay of the interpreter, teamster, and myself, amounted to nearly \$550, mostly for presents necessarily used in the settlement of the Wa-hee difficulty above referred to; our pay for that time amounting to six hundred dollars, (\$600,) making a total of nine hundred and fifty dollars, all of which I paid out of my private funds.

Upon the 13th day of July, 1861, I submitted this matter to Governor J. W. Nye, superintendent, &c., who had then arrived and taken charge of affairs, when he promised to see that I was paid at a very early day. Nothing, however, was done in the matter until after I had left the service. Late in 1862 I took the matter into my own hands and sent a statement to the department, together with my account properly made out. The department disallowed \$41 66 $\frac{2}{3}$  per month on my pay, and the amount paid by me for a small quantity of provisions that I had on hand at the Walker reservation when Governor Nye took charge. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent me a draft for the remainder of my account, and upon which I received legal tender notes, worth at that time only fifty cents on the dollar in gold, which was what I had paid out.

At the request of the superintendent, I remained in his employ up to August 31, 1862, during which time the services I performed consisted entirely in visiting the various Indian tribes within the superintendency, and twice I was sent to Owen's river, California. Whenever a difficulty broke out, or was anticipated, I was sent to adjust it—being so employed most of the time, and kept the entire time travelling in the service. Partial accounts of some of these trips and of my doings will be found in my reports to the superintendent under dates as follows: January 12, 1862, January 28, 1862, April 20, 1862, and May 10, 1862, embodied in the reports of the superintendent under dates February 3, 1862, and June 17, 1862, addressed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C., and published in his annual report for A. D. 1862—reports Nos. 46 and 47. Accounts of other trips taken by me were not published, and being of about the same character of proceedings as those above referred to, I deem their detail here unimportant. I will state, however, that after I had quit the Indian service in Nevada, at the request of Brigadier General Wright, honorable L. Stanford, then governor of California, and John P. H. Wentworth, superintending agent for the southern district of that State, I went three hundred miles south, to Owen's river, California, and collected the hostile Indians of that region to enable Mr. Wentworth to meet them in council and settle that war.

In May, 1862, I received a commission dated March 6, 1862, appointing me United States marshal for Nevada Territory, but owing to the peculiar judicial arrangement of our courts at that time, the duties of that office did not interfere with my engagements with the superintendent of Indian affairs. On the 27th day of October, 1862, I received a commission dated August 29, 1862, appointing me assessor of internal revenue for the district of Nevada, and I am now engaged in the discharge of the duties of that office, and have been almost constantly since the receipt of the above-named commission.

There are now within this State two distinct tribes of Indians, viz: the Pah-Utes and the Washoes; the Pah-Utes number about three thousand five hundred (3,500) souls, the Washoes about three hundred, (300,) both tribes having diminished over one-half within the past six years, the result of small-pox and other diseases, together with war and famine. Part of the Shoshones tribe roam over and inhabit the eastern part of the State, and a part of the Modoc and the Bannack tribes inhabit the northern portion. I am not acquainted with the numbers of these tribes belonging within this State.

The Pah-Utes and Washoe Indians are peaceably disposed, and would, with proper management, soon acquire many of the arts of civilized life, and support themselves by honest industry.

I would recommend most earnestly the same course to be pursued towards them, so far as altered times and circumstances will permit, with the few exceptions hereinafter named, that I had the honor to suggest in my reports to Governor Nye, dated July 13, 1861, and August 13, 1861, as published in the annual report of the honorable the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1861, pages 113, 114, 115, and 116.

The exceptions which I would suggest to my report, August, 1861, above referred to, are as follows: "And in April of each year to the Pah-Utes, in fancy articles, \$1,500; and in April of each year to the Washoe, in fancy articles, \$150;" these items being no longer necessary.

This recommendation was made on account of my observations, that in the spring of the year the Indians were more inclined to be troublesome, their horses being fat, and themselves able to subsist in large bands at almost any point, giving them a temporary feeling of independence, while a few such presents from the government at such times would keep them quiet.

In my report to Governor Nye, dated April 12, 1862, before referred to, I called his attention to this matter, and asked that the sums named for "fancy articles" be issued in hickory shirts and overalls. The Indians were at that time much dissatisfied, and I thought the recommendation necessary; it was not, however, acted upon. I would not now recommend the issue of anything but useful articles to them.

The Truckee reserve possesses superior advantages in respect to soil, climate, and timber, and with proper cultivation would produce abundant crops, which would encourage the Indians to additional exertions.

Crops on the Walker reservation would not be as certain, and would cost more to produce. These two reservations, properly managed, are sufficient to sustain all the Indians in this State; but unless they are so managed, the sooner they are abolished the better.

The first appropriation for the Indian service in Nevada was made July 5, 1862, (U. S. Stat., vol. 1861-'62, page 529,) \$20,000, for the purpose of making a treaty with the Shoshones or Snakes. The next was made July 17, 1862, (U. S. Stat., vol. 1861-'62, page 629,) "for pay of interpreter, \$500; for presents of goods and clothing to the Indians, to be expended by the superintendent of Indian affairs, \$5,000; for incidental expenses in Nevada Territory, including office and travelling expenses, \$2,000; making the total \$7,500." The next was made March 3, 1863, (U. S. Stat., vol. 1862-'63, page 791,) "for general incidental expenses of the Indian service in Nevada Territory, presents of goods, agricultural implements, and other useful articles, and to assist them to locate in permanent abodes, and sustain themselves by the pursuits of civilized life, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, \$25,000." The next was made June 25, 1864, (U. S. Stat., vol. 1863-'64, page 179,) for the same purposes and of the same amount, \$25,000. The appropriations made by the last Congress for Indian service in Nevada was the same purpose and amount as the two last foregoing, to wit, \$25,000. Making the aggregate appropriated for the Indian service in Nevada, since the organization of the Territory, (no appropriation having been made before,) exclusive of the expense of twenty thousand dollars for treaty with the Shoshones or Snakes, and the last twenty-five thousand dollars named above, the sum of fifty-seven thousand five hundred dollars, (\$57,500.) I am not in possession of the facts necessary to enable me to answer your questions as to how these appropriations have been expended. In my judgment they have not been judiciously expended.

No improvements of any amount or nature have been made on the Walker reservation since I left there in June, 1861.

I have not been to the Truckee reservation since 1862; there were no improvements there at that time, and all that I now know about improvements on that reservation is hearsay. I am credibly informed that all the improvements now on the Truckee reservation belonging to the government consist of a small house worth about \$600, about five acres of ploughed ground, upon which nothing has yet been raised, and an attempt to build a saw-mill; an insufficient dam was put across the river, but was washed away by the currents, and a considerable race or canal has been dug, but is wrong end up, or, at least, has not fall enough to conduct the water. The labor expended on this saw-mill enterprise at the reservation, I am informed, would cost about \$1,500 or \$2,000. There are several settlers or intruders having some improvements now on the Truckee reservation. There is a timber lot reserved for the use of the proposed saw-mill, located on the Truckee river about forty miles above the Truckee Indian reservation; think it was located in the fall of 1862; do not remember the exact number, but believe it contains about 28,000 acres; is heavily timbered, of a good quality, and would be cheap at five dollars per acre for the privilege of taking off the timber only. I regard the timber lot as being worth over one hundred thousand dollars, (\$100,000,) and think it could be readily sold for that amount. A large number of logs have been cut upon this timber lot, which were to have been run down the river to the saw-mill, but it is said they have been mostly destroyed by fire. I have thus described about all the improvements on the reservations.

There is or was a man by the name of Gibson employed on the Truckee reserve, in the capacity of what they call "local agent," and another on the Walker reservation, Franklin Campbell by name, whom I know to be a good, honest, and reliable man, much esteemed by the Indians. The reservations are not cultivated, nor either moral, educational, or religious instruction imparted to the Indians upon either of them. There are probably not more than a hundred Indians on either reservation at this season of the year—during the fishing season—and in the winter they come into the reservations. I have always felt a deep interest in the welfare of the Pah-Ute Indians, believing that they are better disposed, more industrious, temperate, and virtuous, and more susceptible of civilization than any other tribe upon the continent.

For the above reasons, please excuse me for making the following suggestions with a view to their advancement:

First. That there be but one superintendent, or agent, having entire charge of the whole affair, there being no good reason why the duties cannot be performed by one, while, otherwise, there is always a conflict of jurisdiction between the superintendents and the agents, causing mutual disagreements, injurious to both the government and the Indians, while, as a matter of economy, one is to be preferred. The necessary employes can be hired cheaper without commissioning them, which inflates their ideas of compensation.

Second. That the department prevent traders and intruders from going upon the reservation.

Third. That the Hon. the Secretary of the Interior require the last appropriation to be expended for specific purposes, and not left to the discretion of any superintendent or agent.

I would respectfully suggest the following as a proper apportionment:

For school-house on the Truckee reservation, 16 by 30 feet in size	\$1,000
For dwelling-house, 16 by 40 feet	1,250
For stable for animals, 15 by 40 feet	300
For two large breaking ploughs, to cut, 20 inches each	150
For three small ploughs	150
For eight yoke of oxen, yokes and chains	1,600
For four team mules	800
For one set of harness for four mules	150
For one four-wheeled wagon	300
For one ox-mule	250
For fifty barrow teeth	50
For one hay press	250
For rakes, pitchforks, scythes, axes, hoes, shovels, &c.	300
For blacksmith shop and tools, with tools for wood-work	800
For school-books, stationery, lights, &c.	300
For medicines	50
For salary of teacher, blacksmith, and farmer, at \$1,800 each per annum, with board	5,400
For provisions for employes	2,500
For garden seeds, grains, &c.	2,000
For feed for teams	400
For provisions and clothing for the Indians	3,000
For ten milk cows	300
For travelling expenses of agent and of interpreter	2,200
For contingent expenses, unforeseen	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,000</b>

All the above items could be purchased of the best quality for the prices set opposite them.

I would not recommend any improvements on the Walker reservation next year, for reasons before given in this statement. With twenty-five thousand dollars judiciously expended as above apportioned, a crop could be produced next summer, including the tax that could be harvested, that would bring in this market over thirty thousand dollars, (\$30,000,) if sold. The surplus, over what would be required to feed the Indians, teams, and employes, would furnish seeds for both reservations for the next year, and part could be sold, which, with an appropriation of twenty thousand dollars, (\$20,000,) would put the reservations in a condition soon to be self-sustaining. Many of the Indians now understand all kinds of work necessary to carry on this arrangement, except teaching school and blacksmithing.

Richard A. Washington, a Pah-Ute by birth, now about nineteen (19) years of age, who was educated by Agent Dodge, and is now employed as interpreter at the Walker reserve, is a very correct reader, excellent penman, and good mathematician, would be of great service as assistant teacher, and could soon manage a school himself, and would take great pride in doing so.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WARREN WASSON.

HON. W. HIGBY.