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INDIAN TRIBES IN KANSAS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A report of A. R. Banks, relative to the destitute condition of various Indian tribes in Kansas.

APRIL 24, 1868.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 23, 1868.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress a copy of the report, dated the 9th instant, of Special Indian Agent Alexander R. Banks, containing a statement of the destitute condition of various Indian tribes in Kansas.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. H. BROWNING, *Secretary.*

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL U. S. INDIAN AGENT,
Lawrence, Kansas, April 3, 1868.

SIR: In accordance with instructions from Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles E. Mix, dated January 8, 1868, I have the honor to submit the following report of my operations as special United States Indian agent. Immediately upon the receipt of my instructions, I consulted with Superintendent Thomas Murphy, in relation to the condition of the Indians within the limits of the central superintendency.

It was the opinion of Colonel Murphy that immediate steps should be taken to relieve the pressing necessities of the Osage and Kaw Indians. In order that I might more fully satisfy myself respecting the actual condition of these tribes, I addressed letters to Agents Snow and Stover, requiring from them written statements as to the number, location, and present condition of the tribes under their charge. Without waiting for replies to these letters, I proceeded at once to visit the Kaw Indians on their reservation, and found from personal inspection that they were in a state of extreme destitution, and I have no doubt

but that for the prompt action of Agent Stover in supplying them with such scanty provisions as was in his power, many of these people would have perished from actual starvation. The fact that this tribe is now at war with the powerful confederated tribes of Cheyennes, Arrapahoes, and Apaches is, of itself, a sufficient explanation of their destitute circumstances, as they are not numerically strong enough to venture upon the plains in pursuit of their almost sole support, the buffalo.

Agent Stover having reported that it would be necessary to supply eight hundred (800) of these people with food, I at once notified the contractor, Colonel Thomas A. Osborn, to commence the delivery at the Kaw agency of that number of rations daily, under and in accordance with the stipulations of his contract.

After supplying the immediate wants of the Kaws, I visited the tribe of Great and Little Osages, on their reservation on the Verdigris river, in the southern part of the State of Kansas. I found the Osages in the same condition as the Kaws, destitute and at war with the Cheyennes, Arrapahoes, and Apaches. Agent Snow represents this tribe, numbering three thousand four hundred and forty-nine souls, as being very greatly in need of assistance. He says many of them were robbed of all they had by the plain Indians, and all were driven in from the buffalo range about the first of last November, which deprived them of obtaining a supply of meat and tallow or any robes or furs. From personal acquaintance with this tribe I am well satisfied that Agent Snow has fairly represented the necessities of the Indians under his charge, and that they absolutely require assistance from the government in the way of food until the difficulties at present existing between them and the Indians of the plains can be amicably adjusted. In view of these facts I have therefore transferred to Agent Snow for the use of these Indians three thousand five hundred rations daily since the first day of February last. Agent Snow having strongly represented the entire destitution of the Quapaw Indians, numbering three hundred and fifty souls, I have instructed the contractor to deliver that number of rations daily at the temporary Neosho agency for the use of this tribe.

After supplying the above-mentioned tribes, I visited Fort Larned, for the purpose of conferring with Agent Wynkoop, in relation to the condition of the Cheyennes, Arrapahoes, and Apache Indians. Major Wynkoop states that, according to the best information he can obtain and the census taken by Commissioners Bogy and Irwin, in the month of November, 1866, the tribes under his charge number eight thousand six hundred souls. But a part of this number having gone north he is of the opinion that about seven thousand four hundred still remain within the limits of his agency.

In regard to their condition Agent Wynkoop reports these Indians to be much in need of assistance, and states that in his opinion their being liberally supplied with food will render them satisfied and prevent any disposition toward hostilities on their part during the coming summer. As far as these Indians are concerned, they have, up to the present time, faithfully fulfilled the condition of the treaties made with them last fall, evincing no desire to commit depredations, either on individuals or trains passing through their hunting grounds.

Agent Wynkoop decided to issue the supplies for these tribes at Fort Dodge, Kansas, and in making this decision I was governed by the fact that it was the point nearest to the Indian camps, and the only place where I could procure sufficient storage for supplies furnished.

The impossibility of concentrating the Indians at any point on a given day, explains the necessity of having to store the supplies. I find it entirely out of the question to supply these different tribes at the Big Bend of the Arkansas river.

The nearest camps are one hundred miles distant from that point, and the country in the immediate vicinity completely destitute of grass. Therefore,

after consultation with the agent, I have issued a requisition upon the contractor for seven thousand four hundred rations daily, to be delivered at Fort Dodge. The number of Indians, and consequently the amount of supplies necessary to subsist them, will vary somewhat, as soon as the grass affords pasturage for their horses and permits them to wander at will over the prairie. The general belief on the frontier and among those who are well acquainted with the habits of the Indians of the plains is, that the subsistence of these Indians by the government will avert hostilities and prevent depredations by these tribes during the summer. I fully concur in this belief, and feel well satisfied that in no other manner can the government so rapidly and easily acquire complete control over these wild tribes as by a continuance of the present humane and successful policy.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALEX. R. BANKS,
Special United States Indian Agent.

Hon. N. G. TAYLOR,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.