

2-20-1874

Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,
transmitting a report showing the necessity that
exists for legislation in behalf of the Mission Indians
in California.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indian and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 156, 43d Cong., 1st Sess. (1874)

This House Executive Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact darinfox@ou.edu.

MISSION INDIANS IN CALIFORNIA.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A report showing the necessity that exists for legislation in behalf of the Mission Indians in California.

FEBRUARY 25, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 20, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to present herewith, for the consideration of Congress, a copy of a report, dated the 18th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and accompanying papers therein referred to, showing the necessity that exists for legislation in behalf of the Mission Indians in California, as recommended in the communication which I had the honor to make to Congress on the 24th January, 1874, in relation to the subject.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER of the *House of Representatives.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., February 18, 1874.

SIR: Referring to Office report of the 22d ultimo, recommending legislation in behalf of the Mission Indians in California, I have the honor to submit herewith, with the recommendation that the same be transmitted to Congress, a copy of a letter from Rev. J. G. Ames, late special agent, dated the 17th instant, together with copies of the inclosures therein referred to, showing the great necessity for prompt action by Congress in providing for said Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWD. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 11, 1874.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the information of the Indian Office, extract copies of letters received by me from Mr. M. H. Crafts, of San Bernardino, Cal., and C. N. Wilson, esq., of Los Angeles, Cal., in reference to the Mission Indians in California.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN G. AMES,
Late Special Agent.

Hon. E. P. SMITH,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

CRAFTON, SAN BERNARDINO, CAL., *January 27, 1874.*

MY DEAR SIR: This morning an Indian runner came in from Portrero, San Geronia Pass, to me, saying that last evening a white man, R. C. Moore, shot and mortally wounded the Indian, by name, Juan Largo, there. His account of the affair is, that the Indian was at Moore's house in liquor; that Moore ordered him away, and not going at once, he drew his revolver and shot him in the bowels. The Indian was alive when he left. How badly he is wounded I cannot yet learn, but if his intestines are wounded, of course there is no hope.

The Portrero chief was here, and a number of Indians.

I at once harnessed up and went to the city, made my complaint to the prosecuting attorney, who issued a warrant for the arrest of Moore, who will be brought in in a couple of days. In this case there is one witness. Both are old hands of mine. I also engaged Judge Rolfe to assist the prosecuting attorney in the management of the case, and here let me introduce you to him, as a true, honest, high-minded man, and that can be trusted to the fullest extent. He has been district judge of this and San Diego Counties for the past two years; now his term of office has expired.

This is the second case of shooting Indians in that place within the last eight months. You will recollect the poor fellow lying at Portrero when we were there. * * *

I could do nothing less than take the matter up in behalf of the Indians. I have also laid the other case of shooting before Judge Rolfe. He says that the dismissing of that case does not bar further investigation, and if he and the prosecuting attorney advise, shall bring that matter before the grand jury. I want, by these proceedings, to assure the Indians that they will from this be protected, and so reassure them that they will patiently wait till the Government shall be prepared to do for them.

It is unpleasant for me to assume this attitude, so against the common sentiment of the country—the defense of the Indians. It would not be so obnoxious if I was clothed with official capacity. But I must do my duty as a fellow Christian man, come what may. All the Indians now come to me with their grievances, and it breaks in on my time a good deal. I keep telling them to wait patiently, and the right will be done by them. But they cannot understand the delay.

Every day becomes more and more critical. Indian matters are fast putting on shape that must be promptly met. If nothing is done for the relief of the Indian, far better that nothing was attempted. Better that I had continued a silent looker-on of Indian wrongs. My word has gone out too often that their wrongs should be redressed, and if I have to go back on my word, in whom they have placed so much confidence, what will be the effect of such white man's promises but the old history? It must be impressed upon Congress to act in this matter, and that promptly.

All the Indians say that they will not plant this year; "it is no use." White men take their water, and their stock eat up what they try to raise. The result will be that the Indian will get his living off the white man, stealing and killing his stock, and in other ways. Should the Indians be put in such straits? And will it pay, even in dollars and cents? Upon whom will the responsibility lay?

I wish I could be assured by the Department that I shall be sustained in what I do. * * * I want also to be able to assure those I seek to interest in Indian affairs, that I have at least your sympathy, or that of the Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and I wish I could have something in that direction at once. This prosecution, and the other, if done, will attract and excite much interest, comment, and opposition from white men, and much expectancy on the part of the Indians.

I will not further comment now, unless it may be to say that I am sorry that some small notions, blankets, calico, and shirts, and perhaps a few other things, could not have been distributed this winter. * * *

Yours truly,

M. H. CRAFTS.

Rev. J. G. AMES.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,
January 28, 1874.

DEAR SIR: A copy of your report reached me nearly a month since; also a letter dated December 30, for both of which I am obliged to you.

The recommendations in your report are, in my opinion, all very good, and if any or all of them are carried out by the Government, must be of great advantage to the Indians.

From what I can learn, the Mission Indians are more hopeful and better contented since your visit to them than they have been for years. They trust in the promises made by you to them, and look for speedy help from the Government. Oligario has not been here since last summer. He sent me word that he would be here in a few days, but gave no information as to his business. * * *

C. N. WILSON.

Rev. JOHN G. AMES