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**Appropriation for purchasing supplies for Indians of the Milk River Agency. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, in relation to an appropriation for the purpose of purchasing supplies for Indians of the Milk River Agency.**

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APPROPRIATION FOR PURCHASING SUPPLIES FOR INDIANS OF THE MILK RIVER AGENCY.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN RELATION TO

*An appropriation for the purpose of purchasing supplies for Indians of the Milk River agency.*

DECEMBER 20, 1871.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, D. C., December 16, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication dated the 15th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, reporting the necessity that exists for an immediate appropriation for the purpose of purchasing supplies for the Indians of the Milk River agency, including large bodies of Sioux, belonging to the Santee, Yankton, Yanktonnais, Sisseton, Wahpeton, and other bands, now located there, numbering eight thousand souls, more or less.

The papers received at this Department representing the state of affairs at the Milk River agency are herewith submitted to Congress, together with an estimate of appropriation for the subsistence of the Indians referred to, in the sum of \$100,000, for the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1872, to which I earnestly request the favorable consideration of that body.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

B. R. COWAN,  
*Acting Secretary.*

Hon. JAMES G. BLAINE,  
*Speaker House of Representatives.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., December 15, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the within copies of letters from J. A. Viall, superintendent Indian affairs, dated May 20, July 17, and October 6, 1871, with inclosures from A. J. Simmons,

United States Indian agent for the Gros Ventre and Assinaboine Indians attached to the Milk River agency, in the northeastern part of Montana.

The present state of affairs at this agency is of urgent importance. Within the last eight months large bodies of Sioux of the Santee, Yankton, Yanktonnais, Sisseton, Wahpeton, and other bands, numbering some two thousand lodges, have collected there unexpectedly, and have notified the agent of their intention to make their permanent homes in that locality. Since the outbreak in Minnesota in 1862, in which many of these Indians participated; they have been roaming at large through Dakota and Montana, committing depredations wherever they went, in open and avowed hostility to our people, and to the various Indian tribes with whom they came in contact. They now desire peace; and there is reason to believe that under judicious management they may be brought permanently within the control of the agent, and learn to adopt other habits of life.

After repeated but fruitless efforts to induce these Indians to go upon the reservation set aside for the different tribes of Sioux in Dakota, it was found necessary to provide for them temporarily where they now are. They were clamorous for food, and would probably have taken it by force had the agent refused to furnish them voluntarily from the winter supplies he had in store for the Indians of his agency proper, numbering some three thousand and five hundred souls. These supplies, the agent reports, are now nearly exhausted, and the remnant of the appropriation for the Gros Ventres and Assinaboines, reduced by this unexpected contingency, will not be sufficient for their own support to the end of the present fiscal year, much less to provide for the eight thousand Sioux, more or less, who have collected around them.

I would, therefore, most earnestly recommend that the attention of Congress be invited to the necessity for an immediate provision to meet the exigency of the case, and that an appropriation of \$100,000 be asked for the subsistence and support of these Indians up to the 30th June, 1872.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

F. A. WALKER,  
Commissioner.

Hon. C. DELANO,  
Secretary of the Interior.

*Estimate of appropriation required for the Indian service at Milk River agency, Montana Territory, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1872.*

For this amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the subsistence of Indians at the Milk River agency in Montana, including eight thousand Sioux now collected at that place, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1872..... \$100,000

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT INDIANS,  
Helena, Montana Territory, May 20, 1874.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit the report of Special Agent A. J. Simmons, in reference to Santee, Yankton, and other Sioux at the Milk River agency. They are an aggregation of various bands. Some few have belonged to different reservations in Dakota and Nebraska. Others were in Minnesota and took part in the massacre there in 1862. Some have never been attached to reservations, and the whole band has roamed along the Upper Missouri River, on the north side, and from there to the Brit-

ish possessions for a number of years, having committed a great many depredations and generally been hostile. As they have now shaken hands with Agent Simmons and declared their purpose of remaining in the Milk River country, and having promised to behave themselves in future, I would respectfully recommend that their wishes be complied with in accordance with the agent's recommendation, to wit: That supplies be furnished them, and they be placed on an equal footing with the Assinaboines, without which it will be impossible to keep them peaceable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. A. VIALL,  
*Superintendent Indians for Montana.*

HON. E. S. PARKER,  
*Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

FORT BROWNING, MONTANA TERRITORY,  
*Milk River Agency, May 12, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to report in reference to important matters transpiring at this agency.

About two hundred and sixty lodges of Santee and Yankton Sioux, including some Sissetons, Wahpetons, Cutheads, Blackfeet Sioux, and Tetons, moved up Milk River and encamped twenty miles below this agency on the 30th day of April last. They are mostly wild Indians, belonging to no reservation, and have been committing depredations along the Missouri River from Fort Buford to Muscleshell for several years past. Last summer they fought this agency, making six different attacks, and stole all the horses belonging to the Government and of the employés. (See annual report of late Agent Reed, 1870.) Two years ago they killed seven wood-choppers near Fort Peck, have attacked Muscleshell on different occasions, killing men and taking horses, and attacked Major Reed and party of twelve men near the former point about two years since, killing four of the party. The last outrage known to have been perpetrated by them was the killing of Messrs. Ross and McKnight in February last, two white men out hunting between the Muscleshell and Milk River. They have been in a state of open and avowed hostility to our people and the various Indian tribes; have been more hostile and troublesome in Montana than all other tribes, and the above-named instances are only a few of their many outrages which can be cited to the Department in confirmation of this assertion. They are superior to the neighboring people in equipments for warfare, and I think are braver and better warriors. Their horses are numerous and of good quality, and they keep constantly on hand a large supply of ammunition, which they can always procure from the half-breeds of the British Possessions. They have become the great terror of the whites on the Upper Missouri River, and have seldom allowed an opportunity for depredations upon them to pass. The white people who travel this country are in constant fear of meeting their war parties, well knowing that a conflict, and generally a desperate one, will ensue when they do so. They have been steadily roaming west for years past, following up the game and great herds of buffalo, which now appear to be almost surrounded and cornered in the northern part of this Territory. Heretofore they have only sent war parties to this vicinity; now they have come in force with their whole encampment, asserting that they "*have come to stay.*"

A large camp of the Assinaboine people (a branch of the Sioux, speaking nearly the same language) belonging to this agency, were encamped half a mile below the agency, and are the only tribe in Montana with whom the Sioux are at peace. As heretofore stated, the latter had moved within twenty miles of the agency, when the Assinaboines, who had been at their camp, ascertained that they had come for the purpose of attacking the agency. I procured the services of the only person who would take the risk of going to their camp, Mr. George Boyd, who had formerly been a trader among them, and who speaks their language, and sent him to them with some presents and tobacco for a smoke, instructing him to say that I desired to shake hands and have peace, and wished some of their chiefs and leading men to come to the agency and have a talk, which at first they agreed to do, but after several days' delay, and messages in the mean time passing between us, they became suspicious, afraid of treachery, and backed, and finally sent me word they would not shake hands nor talk unless I came to their camp; that I could come with Boyd and have safe conduct in and out. I accepted this as the only alternative, and the following morning loaded a wagon with provisions and tobacco to make a feast for the whole camp, and, taking Boyd and my interpreter and two Assinaboine chiefs, Red Stone and Little Bull, started for the camp, where I arrived at 12 m. the same day, the 4th instant, and was met about four miles from their camp by a large party of mounted warriors, who surrounded and escorted me in. After the feast was concluded and we had smoked together, the chiefs, headmen, and soldiers assembled, and we had a talk in the soldiers' lodge. After expressions of

peace, friendship, and good will by me in behalf of the Great White Father, the people at the agency, and the whites generally towards them, and our strong desire to be at peace, Standing Buffalo, the head Santee chief, a large, fine looking man, replied as follows: I had shown a friendly disposition by coming to their camp to see and talk with them; he shook hands with me and he meant it; his heart was good towards all white people, and he spoke with but one tongue. Many years ago they had lived in Minnesota and Dakota and on the Missouri below Milk River. Some of them knew how to farm, had been taught by their white fathers, (agents.) At times they had been friendly and at times at war with the whites; they now wanted a long peace; he spoke for all his people; they all wanted to shake hands and be friends with the white people. Their country below was burnt and dead; the game was all gone; they couldn't live in it; they had now come here; they liked this country; here they could make plenty of robes and make plenty of meat. Their country was wherever the buffalo ranged; here was plenty of buffalo; it was their country and they had come to live in it. They were chiefs of the mountains and plains. They were not poor, but rich; had plenty of horses and robes, and wanted to go into the agency and trade their robes with the white traders. They would shake hands and make permanent peace; but the Great White Father must give them flour, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and ammunition, and send them blankets and other things, same as received by the Assinaboines.

I told them that the Great White Father, above all things, desired peace and friendship with them. He wished them to cease their warfare upon the whites, and tribes of friendly Indians, and he would then provide for them, and give them the same as he gives the Assinaboines; that some of them had been already provided for in the lower or eastern country. This country belonged to the Gros Ventres and Assinaboines. The Great Father had sent nothing here for the Sioux; he did not know they were here. That I would write and inform him they had come here; that I had been to their camp, smoked, and shook hands with them, and tell him what they had said. When they had refused to visit me I had trusted them, and come to their camp on their invitation, because I relied on their word, and was anxious to talk, and shake hands, and assure them our hearts were good, and that we desired peace. I wished them to place equal confidence in me, and come to the agency the next day, when I would talk more and answer their request for provisions, ammunition, &c. The chief promised to come the next day, and I left their camp a little before sundown, the best of feeling prevailing.

I had eighteen soldiers at the agency, under Lieutenant Quinton, who had come from Fort Shaw as escort for a train of provisions for the agency.

On the following day the whole camp moved within ten miles of the agency, and "Standing Buffalo," with about fifty of his warriors, came to see me. The gates were thrown open, they were welcomed cordially, and a feast prepared. A council was held, in which I urged them to act in good faith, and remain at peace as a matter of right, and from every consideration of policy and self-interest. At the same time I told them that we wanted no half-way peace—it must be complete and permanent; that the Great Father had plenty of soldiers in the big forts above, and would protect his people; that peace with us meant and included the Gros Ventres and Assinaboines, who were our well-tryed and trusted friends. They made many professions of friendship, and renewed their demand for flour, sugar, coffee, tobacco, ammunition, and blankets.

Having a large amount of provisions on hand, I gave them flour, sugar, coffee, some tobacco, saleratus, and salt. Refused them ammunition, but purchased a few blankets, (from E. S. Mansfield, esq., who had a few in store at this point awaiting shipment,) and made the chiefs and headmen presents of the same, and then told them I would report to the Great Father, and request that provisions be sent here for them during the summer, and that blankets and other annuities be sent before the snow falls. They expressed great satisfaction, and "Standing Buffalo," with three of his men, remained at the agency over night.

On the following day they moved up and encamped close by the Assinaboines, making a village of about five hundred lodges. On the same day the Yankton chief, "Strike the Ree's Son," with a body of warriors, at my request came up for a feast and a talk. They were more suspicious, appeared wilder, and were harder to please than the Santees. About sixty of them came into the council-house, and during the talk were noticed to have their guns loaded and cocked. The council was substantially the same as that with the Santees, and an equal issue of provisions was made to them. They were not as well satisfied, mainly, I think, because they are not as well disposed, and, also, because I would not give them ammunition.

While they remained encamped here they spent several days in feasting and dancing the "big medicine," "bear," "war," and "scalp" dances. On the 8th instant they came to the agency in force and made a demand for coffee, sugar, flour, tobacco, and ammunition. I willingly made a compromise by giving them a little flour, over which the Yankton portion of the camp got into a general fight in dividing among themselves their share. On the 10th about seventy-five women, mostly Santees, came to the agency

and danced the scalp dance, having fifteen Indian scalps, recently taken in battle by their husbands and relatives, attached to poles which they waved and brandished with great glee and triumph. I mention these circumstances as indicating the stage of civilization of these Indians. They are but the vanguard of a large body of Yanktons, numbering, I am informed, over two hundred lodges, who are also moving up Milk River to this point.

I desire instructions in regard to these people. I have taken the responsibility of issuing to them from the supplies belonging to the Gros Ventres and Assinaboines, which it will be necessary to replace. Under the circumstances it was the only course I could pursue, and has had a good effect. I think the larger portion of the camp—those under “Standing Buffalo”—earnestly desire peace, and that they can be managed and friendly relations maintained with them by kind treatment and by placing them upon an equal footing with the Assinaboines. I have advised them to stay with the Assinaboines for the present, which they will do. All are now moving together toward the Little Rocky Mountains to hunt buffalo. I have been to their camp three times since they left the agency; have had long talks with “Standing Buffalo” and the soldiers, and “Red Stone” (head Assinaboine chief) has talked with good effect in our interest. The Yanktons have no chief among them who has much influence with or control over them. They appear to be made up of renegades from various bands, composing a camp of about the worst Indians I ever saw. I consider it doubtful as to whether they will remain peaceful, even if every provision is made for them.

In dealing with the Sioux, to maintain friendly relations with them, it is absolutely necessary to feed and clothe them, and a large amount of supplies for that purpose should be sent here as soon as possible. To compel them to return to the lower country, or to prevent others from coming here, I regard as wholly impracticable. The conformation of the country, the Rocky Mountain range cutting off the game on the west, and the powerful Blackfeet Nation occupying the eastern slope and the country for some distance on this side, present insurmountable barriers to further progress of the Sioux westward. It occurs to me that this is their last resort; that here their wild, savage life must cease with the disappearance of the game, and they be compelled to engage in agricultural and civilized pursuits.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. J. SIMMONS,

*United States Special Agent, Milk River Agency.*

HON. E. S. PARKER,

*Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

(Through J. A. Viall, superintendent Indian affairs, Helena, Montana.)

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OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIANS,  
*Helena, Montana Territory, July 17, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter from Special Agent Simmons, giving particulars of the death of Standing Buffalo, chief of the band of Santee Sioux on Milk River, and other information in regard to the Sioux Indians in that section of country.

I would earnestly invite the attention of the Department to the inclosed communication, as being of great importance and interest to the service. These Sioux Indians *will not* leave the Milk River country; they prefer it not only on account of game, but also on account of it being so remote from white settlements. They express their sincere desire to remain at peace, and to be fed and treated as other well-disposed Indians are treated by the Government. Their large numbers and the difficulty of communication with Fort Browning, (one hundred and sixty miles from a post-office,) necessitates some prompt and decided action on the part of the Government.

It will be seen by Special Agent Simmons's letter that, in addition to the 2,500 Santees in the immediate vicinity of the Milk River agency, there are some five hundred lodges of Yanktonais, Yanktons, Cutheads, and others encamped forty miles below the agency; and between the mouth of Milk River and the Yellowstone River is Sitting Bull's tribe of Sioux, supposed to number one thousand lodges.

Supplies to the amount of \$15,963 75 have been sent to Milk River for the Sioux, and I have given Special Agent Simmons instructions to issue in the most limited and economical manner possible. These supplies were purchased at the prices of the contract made with L. M. Black April 26, 1861.

Of such urgent importance, too, I deem this matter that I respectfully request instructions by telegraph as to what provision is to be made for these Indians, and would also respectfully recommend that a supply of blankets and other useful articles be furnished them for their benefit the coming winter.

I fully indorse Special Agent Simmons's opinion that these Sioux desire to be peace-

able and friendly, and will remain so if judiciously managed and cared for by the Department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. A. VIALL,  
*Superintendent Indians for Montana*

Hon. E. S. PARKER,  
*Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

FORT BROWNING, MONTANA TERRITORY,  
*Milk River Agency, June 20, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that Standing Buffalo, head chief of the band of Santee Sioux, who came to this agency early in May last, and with whom I arranged terms of amity and friendship, was killed in a battle with the Gros Ventres and the Upper Assinaboine Indians on the 5th instant. I have visited and talked with the parties engaged in the conflict on both sides, and learn the following particulars:

A war party of Yanktons came up from Medicine Bear's camp, (a large camp of hostile Yankton Sioux, spoken of in my letter to Hon. Commissioner Parker, dated May 12, 1871,) to the encampment of Standing Buffalo, and urged him to join them in a raid on the Gros Ventres. They talked over the matter two days, and offered Standing Buffalo four horses and other presents if he would join them and lead the party; but he refused, stating he had pledged his word to me that he and none of his people would go to war. The Yanktons abused and derided him, and finally told him he was a coward and no chief if he listened to the whites, and refused to lead them to war. At last Standing Buffalo became wild with rage and excitement, and declared he would go to war, but he would go to die. He then made disposition of all his horse property, and other effects, giving everything away to relatives and friends; counseled his brother and his son and the head men of his tribe to listen when I talked to them, and to abide faithfully by the terms they had made; that he would never return—would die in battle.

He started out and met a large party of Gros Ventres and Upper Assinaboines, superior to his own numbers, on a plain, and charged them. He dashed into the midst himself on his horse, and without firing a shot began striking the enemy with his "coo stick;" he was hit with about thirty shots, and fell.

As soon as I heard of the conflict I visited both camps and the battle-field, and succeeded in making peace between them. Eighteen were killed on both sides, and about the same number were wounded.

The Santees blamed the Yanktons for the loss of their chief, and a very bitter feeling prevailed between them, which resulted in a split in the camp. Those who favored the war, and were not disposed to abide by the terms they had made with me, were driven away, and went below to join Medicine Bear's band, on Milk River, forty miles below the agency. The Gros Ventres and Assinaboines acted on the defensive, and did not desire to continue the conflict, if the Sioux would let them alone.

I brought the Santees to the agency, and removed them across Milk River to the north side. All appeals to go back to the lower country and their old agency are entirely unavailing; they are determined to remain on Milk River, and I am now confident they desire peace with us, and that they will behave themselves by fair and liberal treatment on our part.

From what I can learn of the former history of these people from themselves and other Indians, it appears Standing Buffalo was engaged in the outbreak in Minnesota nine years ago, and after the war he led his people across into the British Possession, where he remained several years. During the last five or six years he has ranged in Northeastern Montana, generally on the Missouri River.

Individuals and families from reservations and other bands have joined him at various times, and became absorbed in his tribe; many of his people have died from wars and famine, but they are numerically stronger now than when they left Minnesota. He was called by his people Tah-tunga-ne-sha. (Standing Buffalo Bull.) This is the first agency he had come to and the first peace he had made since leaving Minnesota in 1862. The depredations committed along the Missouri River for several years past, charged to this band, were mostly done by the Yanktons, under Medicine Bear, and the bad ones in this camp, which have now been expelled.

The Santees were determined to have the remains of their late chief, and on the 13th instant had organized a party of about five hundred warriors to proceed to the battle-field to obtain them. Knowing, if this was done, the war would be renewed, and would be very likely to result in depredations and attacks upon whites, I dissuaded them from it, by pledging myself, if they would abandon the project, I would procure the bones myself before winter set in and inter them at the agency. In order to redeem this pledge, I procured the services of an Assinaboine who was in the fight, to go

with me to the battle-field and point out the remains of the chief, which were found to be in such a state of decomposition as to preclude immediate removal. But I have assured them I will redeem the pledge within the time specified. I was compelled to give the Assinaboine guide a horse, as I could not procure his services without it.

After a thorough investigation of this affair, I am fully convinced this chief, Standing Buffalo, went to war courting death because he was resolved to maintain peace with the whites, and abide faithfully by the terms he had made with me, and was unable to control the Yanktons and some of his own warriors, or prevent them from violating the compact.

Since the first arrival at the agency, the Santees have been joined by a portion of their people, under White Heat, numbering seventy-two lodges, and eighteen lodges have left the camp and joined the Yanktons, which leaves at the present time three hundred and fourteen lodges, or about two thousand five hundred and twelve souls, in the camp.

I desire to call your attention to the urgent necessity of making some provision for these people. Supplies should be furnished them, and they should have annuities the coming winter. If they are now provided for and taken care of, I feel like answering positively for their good behavior; also, if we maintain our peaceful relations with them, it will have a great influence in bringing about a reconciliation with the Yanktons and other hostile Sioux.

Medicine Bear's camp numbers about five hundred lodges, and ranges from forty miles below the agency to the mouth of Milk River below there; and between the mouth of Milk River and the Yellowstone River is the country of the formidable Sitting Bull's tribe of Sioux, supposed to contain one thousand lodges.

I respectfully ask for instructions in reference to the manner of dealing with the Santees and other Sioux on Milk River, and beg leave to state that the matter is important alike to the Department, the Indians, and the whites.

I should state that the locality of the battle-field where Standing Bull fell is near Box Elder Creek, a southern tributary of Milk River, at the base of the Bear's Paw Mountain.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. J. SIMMONS,

*U. S. Special Indian Agent, Milk River Agency.*

Colonel J. A. VIALL,

*Superintendent Indian Affairs, Helena, Montana Territory.*

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OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIANS,

*Helena, Montana Territory, October 6, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith copy of a communication from Special Agent A. J. Simmons, in charge of Mobile River agency, in regard to the subsistence of Sioux and other Indians at that place, being a reply to letter from office Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C., dated August 1, 1871, copy of which was furnished this office.

It is a matter of vital importance to the welfare of these Indians, and to the maintenance of their friendly relations with the Government, that sufficient supplies for their subsistence be furnished them, and the exigency of the case calls for speedy and earnest action.

I would respectfully ask as to whether a portion of the funds appropriated at the last session of Congress for the benefit of Sioux roaming cannot be applied to the Santee and Yankton Sioux at the Milk River agency, to meet their wants until the necessary relief can be obtained from Congress? Unless additional supplies are furnished, they will be destitute early in winter, which will result in incalculable evil to the Government and the Indian tribes along the northwestern border.

Presuming they will be able to supply themselves with meat, as heretofore, by hunting, one million pounds of flour, in addition to what is already provided for them, will be necessary for the subsistence of Indians at the Milk River agency, until 30th June next. This would cost, under the present contract rates, at 7 cents, \$70,000, and will not be more than enough to provide half rations, or six ounces a day for each individual. Also, a very limited supply of sugar, coffee, salt, saleratus, and tobacco, is needed; and some blankets, shirts, and *bed-ticking*, which is much preferred by all Indians in the place of prints and other cotton goods.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. A. VIALL,

*Superintendent Indians for Montana.*

Hon. COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

*Washington, D. C.*



MILK RIVER AGENCY, MONTANA TERRITORY, *September 20, 1871.*

SIR: I am in receipt of your letter of the 11th ultimo, transmitting copy of a letter from Hon. H. R. Clum, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated August 1, 1871, relative to the subsistence of Sioux and other Indians at this agency, directing that all Indians here be treated alike, so far as subsistence is concerned, and stating that there is only about \$40,000 that can be used to carry on the agency for the present fiscal year.

Understanding from your letter that the expense of employes, purchase of medicines and hospital stores, and the necessary contingent expenses of the agency, will come out of this sum, the amount that can be actually applied to subsistence will be materially reduced.

The Indians now attached to this agency number about twelve thousand souls, and this sum is wholly insufficient and inadequate to provide them with food for the coming winter.

So many Indians are here that game is fast disappearing, being rapidly killed off. No beef has been furnished them during the summer. When not able to procure game they have lived without meat. Owing to the diminishing of the game, and the much greater difficulty of their hunting and obtaining it in winter, it will be impossible for them to subsist on that alone during the winter months. Unless partly subsisted by the Government they will be compelled to eat their horses and dogs, and even then starvation among the women and children will to some extent ensue. Under such circumstances their worst passions would be aroused, and an agent would be powerless and his influence over them unavailing; they would be forced to abandon the reservation, to scatter in small bands to procure food, and it is quite certain, judging from all former precedents, that depredations upon the settlements would follow. Whereas, if, in addition to the food they can procure for themselves, the Government will supply the balance necessary for their subsistence, they will remain quiet, as at present, at the reservation, and no hostilities would be likely to occur.

These Sioux are earnestly disposed to peace, having behaved well since they first came to the agency. I have repeatedly advised and urged them to go to the Sioux agencies east. The fact is the Santees have not been to an agency before since they abandoned theirs in Minnesota, nine years ago, and from the feeling among them I am convinced they would suffer a war of extermination rather than return.

I desire to represent the great urgency of this matter, the absolute necessity of providing additional supplies for these Indians with as little delay as possible. The Sioux should have full rations of flour for the winter, with a limited supply of coffee, sugar, salt, and tobacco, as well as blankets, shirts, prints, cotton goods, &c., to be issued to them conditioned on their continued good behavior. I would also urge an appropriation for the benefit of the Indians at this agency, for the next fiscal year, commensurate with their numbers and sufficient for their subsistence. Many of these Sioux are in communication with Sitting Bull, and a peace maintained with them will have an important influence in negotiating with him. It is in effect the first step toward a compromise with the Tetons, which is worthy of consideration.

I most earnestly request that you urge upon the Department the importance to the settlers, the Government, and to the Indians, that these tribes be provided with subsistence, in order that the present peaceful relations with them may be maintained.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. J. SIMMONS,

*United States Special Indian Agent, Milk River Agency.*

Colonel J. A. VIALI,

*Superintendent of Indians, Helena, Montana Territory.*