

APPREHENDED INDIAN TROUBLES.

UNPUBLISHED LETTER BY GOV. JAMES W. GRIMES.

BURLINGTON, IOWA, 3d Dec., 1855.

SIR:—I beg leave to call your attention to the unquiet condition of the frontier settlements of this State, occasioned by the inroads of Indians. During the past two years the northern and western counties of the State have been greatly disturbed by the intrusion of wandering bands of Winnebagoes, Sioux, Pottawattamies, Omahas and Sacs and Foxes. During the summer the greater part of these Indians leave the State, though a band of the Pottawattamies remained in Ringgold county until the latter part of last August, when, having stolen a large quantity of stock and provisions and murdered a white citizen, I directed them to be removed beyond the Missouri river by the sheriff of that county. In the months of October and November, they begin to draw near the settlements, that they may have facilities for pilfering from the whites in the winter months, when their own stock of provisions will be exhausted. During the last winter there were large bands of the Mississippi Sioux in Webster county, of the Yankton Sioux in Woodbury county, of Pottawattamies in Madison and Ringgold counties, and of Omahas in Harrison and Montgomery counties. They were a constant annoyance to the citizens of those counties—destroying their stock—stealing their grain and provisions—threatening their lives, and in some instances committing robbery and murder. The Governor of this State was besought to call out the militia and expel them by force. This I declined to do, but appealed to the general government for protection. All my letters to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on this subject remain unnoticed, save one; but an early spring's vegetation brought to the settlers that relief which they asked and thought that they had a right to expect from the Indian Bureau or from the War Department.

I am reliably informed that the same Indians, but in increased numbers, have again pitched their tents within the State and are making preparations to remain during the winter. The Secretary of this State, Gen. Geo. W. McCleary, writes me that he has information that a large band of Sioux Indians have destroyed the settlements in Buena Vista county and forced the inhabitants to abandon their homes. He also writes me that these Indians are manifestly making preparations for war, and have been and are now making great efforts to induce all of the Mississippi River Sioux to unite with them in hostilities upon the whites. I hear from various sources that several runners have been sent by the Sioux west of the Missouri river, to those in this State, and in Minnesota, with war belts, urging the latter to make common cause with them. The result of all this is a great state of alarm along the whole frontier. The pioneer settlers are abandoning their homes and improvements, and are retiring to the more dense settlements in the interior of the State. Almost everybody anticipates a bloody Indian war, and petitions are reaching me every day, praying that an armed posse may be called out to expel the Indians by force.

Although I do not agree with the greater part of the people in the northwestern counties, that there is danger of open and premeditated hostilities during the winter, I should not be surprised if these Indians attacked the whites so soon as vegetation started in the spring so as to enable them to forage their horses.

But whether they *intend* hostilities or not, difficulties and perhaps war will be likely to result from their intrusion upon the settlers. The frontier men have no great love for Indians—they are suffering loss by their pilfering—they dare not leave their families alone, and, hence, many of them are compelled to remove their families to points in the State where they can be protected. There are bad men enough to sell the Indians whiskey, which converts them into devils and prepares them for any atrocity. They retard the settlement and improvements of that portion of the State. All these consequences of their presence excite the settlers'

minds and render an attack *upon* the Indians but little less imminent than an attack *by* them, events in my view to be equally deplored. I beg leave to call your attention to the importance of having the Indians removed from this State at the earliest possible day. I believe that the public safety demands it. The people of the State conceive that they have a right to ask it. They have bought their homes of the government with the understanding that they were to be protected in the possession. They are virtually denied it so long as the Indians are permitted to harass them by their presence.

A year ago the General Assembly of this State unani- mously asked for the establishment of a military post on the Sioux river near the northwest corner of the State. I con- cur entirely in the propriety of that measure. I have no doubt that two companies of dragoons or cavalry stationed there, would effectually prevent the incursions of the In- dians, and give quiet to the whole northwestern Iowa. With- out such a Post they may be removed, but it does not occur to me how they may be permanently kept out.

I am very truly, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES W. GRIMES.

HON. FRANKLIN PIERCE,
President of the United States.

DAILY—yes, hourly—immigrants are arriving in this and neighboring counties from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. All are in raptures at the lovely sights which here greet their gaze; and they with one accord yield the palm to Western Iowa for lovely prairies, beautiful groves of tim- ber, and meandering streams of water.—*Dubuque Tribune*, 1854.

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