

## INDIAN AFFAIRS IN IOWA TERRITORY.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, IOWA TERRY., 2d August, 1841.

SIR:—Your letters of 13th and 14th ults. came to hand on the 31st, that of the 16th by the preceding mail. I am pleased to find that my views on the subject of our Indian affairs in the Superintendency coincide with yours and the more so, because yours are the result of much observation and experience.

It will give me pleasure, if as you anticipate, my labors here should in any degree tend to lighten yours, or aid you in the performance of them. Your remarks on the subject of the influence of the traders over the Indians, are fully sustained by my own observations and increasing experience, and I am well convinced that whenever the time arrives for holding a treaty with the Sacs and Foxes we shall have great difficulty if we are not to a great extent defeated in the attainment of our principal object, by their management; and if it so turns out, and I have anything to do with the matter, I shall most certainly adopt summary measures to remove their influence from the Indian Territory pending the treaty. I believe, however, they will be cautious how they subject themselves to suspicion, as I have in several friendly conversations with them, assured them that whenever I became convinced that the influence of traders in any part of the Indian country under my superintendence is counteracting or impeding the views of the government, I will convince them that the government is too strong for them—assuring them at the same time that I entertain no unkind feelings towards any of them and would very reluctantly do anything that could affect their interests injuriously. They profess the utmost willingness to act in concert with the views of the government, and will do so, *just so far* as those views do not conflict with their interests. Before this reaches you, you will have learned from my letter of the 27th ultimo, that a compromise between the two parties of Sacs and Foxes as to

the manner of receiving their annuities has been effected, and I have now no uneasiness on that subject, except from the fear of a delay in the payment, which will be incompatible with the repeated assurance given them ever since the suspension of the last year's payment, that the money would be paid whenever they would agree upon the manner of receiving it. You are perfectly aware of the promptitude with which they impute falsehood to those who fail to comply with any promise made them, and that it is almost impossible to regain their confidence if once lost.

I have written to Capt. Bruce and Gov. Doty on the subject of your letter of the 13th ult., and have given to the former an explanation of the object for which the \$5,000 that he was at a loss about, was remitted. I infer from your letter that Gov. Doty is at St. Peters, but have not had the honor to hear from him since his return to the west. In my letter to Mr. Bruce I gave him in substance this view of the subject of educating the Indians—That every effort to educate Indians who remain in a migratory or hunter state, or who are dependent for subsistence upon occasional supplies from the government, is money wasted and labor lost. That I have not yet in all my inquiries been able to find an instance of permanent good, either to individuals or tribes, from any degree of education conferred upon them while in the state described. Among the Sacs and Foxes there is a half-breed who has been well educated—speaks our language and the French with fluency and ease, and is perfectly familiar with the language of several of the tribes, yet he is the most worthless, lying, drunken dog among them, and they sometimes whip him severely for lying. Another half-breed among them has received some education, but makes no use of it, and is a mere Indian in his habits and feelings. Such was the case, too, with a few of the Shawnees when they lived on the Miamies of the lake. I remember one in particular who was a graduate of one of the eastern colleges, who used to say his education had only served to spoil a

good hunter, and in truth he was not good for anything. The Cherokees and other southern Indians who have given some attention to educating their children, did not commence to do so until many of them had acquired some ideas of individual rights and the value of individual property in lands, and had made considerable progress in agriculture. This view of the subject leads me to the conclusion that until these people are permanently located and such neat and comfortable residences erected for them as will soon come to be preferred to the miserable camps in which they usually reside, nothing beneficial can be done for them in the way of education. This effected, hold out inducements to them to cultivate the soil—offer prizes, such for instance as handsome guns with all their equipments, fine clothes, blankets, &c., to the Indian who shall produce, by *male labor*, the best crop of corn, raise the most hogs or cattle, reducing the scale of prizes, but giving something to each male Indian who shall labor to make a crop. These prizes might be exhibited at the agencies by way of stimulating them to exertion. Having taught them the comforts of a home and the value of the products of the soil as a means of subsistence, then, and not till then, will education become valuable to them. These views were given for Mr. Bruce's consideration, and I submit them to you now with the same object, admitting that my inexperience in Indian affairs entitled my opinions to no other consideration than the reasons given for them may entitle them to. You will observe, however, that they go to the root of all attempts at conferring education until the Indians are induced to become to some extent settled and have commenced to depend, in part at least, upon their industry for support; but for this view of the matter I would have mailed Mr. Bruce's and Gov. Doty's opinions before I presented mine. On the subject of the Soap Creek mills near the Sac and Fox agency, I concur in your opinion that any further expenditure for the purpose of putting the saw-mill in operation would be useless under existing circumstances,

but with regard to the corn-mill, I regret that any delay should take place in the execution of the very inconsiderable amount of labor necessary to secure it against a sudden rise of the water, because if the Indians were removed, the value of the mill to the white population which will soon occupy the country forms a sufficient inducement to secure it at so small an expense, and I presume that whenever the Indians are removed measures will be adopted to secure the government at least a portion of the money expended at and near the agency, by a sale of the lands enclosed and reduced to cultivation, buildings, &c., in such manner as will insure a fair competition at the sale of them.

I remain very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN CHAMBERS.

T. HARTLEY CRAWFORD, Esq., Commr. of Ind. Affairs,  
Department of War, Washington City.

P. S.—I enclose you a slip from a dirty paper published [here], to show what use is attempted to be made of the matter to which it relates.

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NULLIFICATION.—The dog law and the law to prevent the discharging of fire arms in the limits of the corporation remain unexecuted. In 1840 a law passed the city council levying a tax of one dollar on each dog, or making it the duty of the marshal to destroy every dog not so paid for. One dog was paid for that year and the rest went stock free. This year again, we know of but one who has paid a dog tax, and hear of but two dogs being destroyed. What a glorious thing it is to have a corporation.—*Davenport, Iowa, Sun, Aug. 6, 1842.*

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