

Referring to the location of an agency for these Indians, or their disposition among existing agencies, upon which we were directed to report, we have to say that the nearest agency to Fort Peck is the Milk River agency, at Fort Browning, distant one hundred and forty miles by the nearest practicable wagon-route. There are now supplied at that agency the Gros Ventres, River Crows, Assinaboines, and Santees, estimated at from four to five thousand. The location is a very bad one; the water is alkaline, and there is no farming-land in the neighborhood, while the buildings are dilapidated and almost untenable. The Assinaboines and Santees are friendly with the Sioux at Fort Peck, very friendly with the whites, and anxious to have their agency removed to the Missouri River. The Gros Ventres and River Crows are at war with the Sioux, and little hope of peace exists. The cost of transportation by land to the Milk River agency from Fort Benton or Fort Peck is about \$1.50 per hundred pounds.

We respectfully suggest the establishment of an agency on the Missouri River at or near Fort Peck, and the removal of the Assinaboines and Santees to that point, to mingle with the Tetons, and be supplied by the agent there. The Gros Ventres and River Crows could then be supplied at Fort Belknap, where the Govern-ment now has supplies under a sub-agent. Should this arrangement be perfected, the buildings at Fort Browning should be destroyed. The advantages of this arrangement would be -

First. An agency on the Missouri River, by which a great saving in transportation would be effected, and the agency be more accessible.

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/ Second. The Assinaboines and Santees would be removed from proximity to the Gros Ventres and River Crows, who are the traditional enemies of their friends the Tetons, and between whom that enmity is liable to cause trouble at any time.

Third. It would largely increase the numbers at Fort Peck, which would give increased confidence to those already there, and tend to disturb the efforts of Sitting Bull's followers, who are trying to draw off those who are now at peace, Fort Peck, as we have said, is simply a trading-post, in a good location, near good