

availing themselves of river navigation, which this season admitted steamers of the largest class to Fort Benton, which is within 180 miles of the gold mines in the Bitter Root valley. This, as soon as understood, will become the great thoroughfare for emigrants to the gold mines.

I think the Salmon river gold mines can be reached much easier by the Yellow Stone river than by the Missouri, while the former is said, by those acquainted with both, to be the best navigable stream, with an abundance of wood and coal on its banks. I am well satisfied, from particles of gold and gold-bearing quartz found on the Missouri and its tributaries, as also from their proximity <sup>196</sup> / and similarity to gold-producing countries, that gold will be found in great abundance at the sources and on the tributaries of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. This would give some 3,000 miles of navigable river within my agency. I therefore feel it to be my duty, being the only party interested in the welfare of the white man in this vast region of country, to request the department to place a military force at two points in the country, before some bloody massacre takes place. Those points I would recommend to be at the mouth of the Heart and Yellowstone rivers or vicinity. One regiment of cavalry thus disposed would give protection to those small tribes of Indians, as well as emigration, by river or overland.

No difficulty need be apprehended from any except the Sioux. No other Indians in the country will molest the white man. Those friendly Sioux declared to me that their treaty only gave the right of way on the river for traders; that no emigration was ever contemplated either by land or water; and they would not submit to it, as emigrants brought disease and pestilence into their country, which destroyed their people, and, upon the other hand, the buffalo would not return to that section of country where they had been pursued by white men. Thus I am satisfied, from the bitterness they manifested, that no party of emigrants could pass overland through their country, and would not be safe on the river. The inference, then, must be, from their expressions, their declinings to receive any more annuities, their desire to rejoin their several bands, from whom they have been separated in consequence of their alliance with the government,