

Remarks On Our Indian System.

Whatever may have been, or may now be, the effect of our Indian system east of the Rocky mountains, where the Indians are organized into large tribes and governed by powerful chiefs, it has proved worse than useless on this coast, where they live in small bands, with no well recognized and responsible head. The farce of Indian treaties should be entirely abandoned, and these savages be taught that they are not independent nations, but the subjects of our government; and that, while they are amenable to our laws, they are entitled to receive our protection.

It is useless to expect the whites and Indians to live together in peace. In revenge for savage barbarities, the frontier settlers kill the Indians without regard to their individual innocence or guilt, The military are powerless to prevent this, and the civil courts will not punish a white man for killing an Indian. Consequently, the Indians retaliate by murdering innocent whites, without regard to sex or age.

The only way in which this murderous frontier war can be terminated within a limited period, is to remove the Indians to some large and well-defined reservations, placed entirely under military authority, and to exclude all white settlers therefrom. It may take years to collect all the tribal Indians on these reservations, but it can be done in time, and thus entirely remove both the cause of, and incentive to, Indian wars.

In condemning our present system as worse than useless, I cast no reflections upon the present officers of the Indian bureau in this division. So far as they are individually concerned, I believe they have endeavored to do as much good as possible with their limited means. The fault is in the system itself, and no efficient remedy can be applied so long as that system is continued. In my opinion, the public interests on this coast imperiously demand a radical change. And this necessity has been made still more imperative by the addition of some forty or fifty thousand tribal and uncivilized natives in Russian America. It is true that these natives now are, and have been for a long time, at peace with the whites; but these peaceful relations will soon be interrupted if our Indian system, with all its corruptions, should be introduced in that country.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

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