

Colonel Kit Carson sworn :

I have heard read the statement of Colonel Bent, and his suggestions and opinions in relation to Indian affairs coincide perfectly with my own. I came to this country in 1826, and since that time have become pretty well acquainted with the Indian tribes, both in peace and at war. I think, as a general thing, the difficulties arise from aggressions on the part of the whites. From what I have heard, the whites are always cursing the Indians, and are not willing to do them justice. For instance, at times large trains come out to this country, and some man without any responsibility is hired to guard the horses, mules, and stock of the trains; these cattle by his negligence frequently stray off; always, if anything is lost, the cry is raised that the Indians stole it. It is customary among the Indians, even among themselves, if they lose animals, as Indians go everywhere, if they bring them in they expect to get something for their trouble. Among themselves they always pay; but when brought in to this man, who lost them through his negligence, he refuses to pay, and abuses the Indians, striking or sometimes shooting them, because they do not wish to give up the stock without pay; and thus a war is brought on. That is the way in which difficulties frequently arise. I have heard read the statement of how the Sioux war arose, which agrees word for word with what I have heard, and what I believe to be the facts. And in relation to the war with the Cheyennes, I have heard it publicly stated that the authorities of Colorado, expecting that their troops would be sent to the Potomac, determined to get up an Indian war, so that the troops would be compelled to remain. I know of no acts of hostility on the part of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes committed previous to the attacks made upon them, as stated by

Colonel Bent. In 1830, or '31, I was one of a party who made peace with the Arapahoes, and since that time I know of no difficulty with them until that described by Colonel Bent. I know of no other great difficulties on the Arkansas route than the Sioux war and the present war. I think the Kiowas are hostile against the government without cause. The other tribes, I think, are rather compelled to be so. Most of the Comanches, I think, are friendly disposed. I think if proper men were appointed and proper steps taken, peace could be had with all the Indians on and below the Arkansas, without war. I believe that, if Colonel Bent and myself were authorized, we could make a solid, lasting peace with those Indians. I have much more confidence in the influence of Colonel Bent with the Indians than in my own. I think if prompt action were taken the Indians could be got together by the tenth of September. I know that even before the acquisition of New Mexico there had about always existed an hereditary warfare between the Navajoes and Mexicans; forays were made into each other's country, and stock, women, and children stolen. Since the acquisition, the same state has existed; we would hardly get back from fighting and making peace with them before they would be at war again. I consider the reservation system as the only one to be adopted for them. If they were sent back to their own country to-morrow, it would not be a month before hostilities would commence again. There is a part of the Navajoes, the wealthy, who wish to live in peace; the poorer class are in the majority, and they have no chiefs who can control them. When I campaigned against them eight months I found them scattered over a country several hundred miles in extent. There is no suitable place in their own country—and I have been all over it—where more than two thousand could be placed. If located in different places, it would not be long before they and the Mexicans would be at war. If they were scattered on different locations, I hardly think any number of troops could keep them on their reservations. The mountains they live in in the Navajo country cannot be penetrated by troops. There are cañons in their country thirty miles in length, with walls a thousand feet high, and when at war it is impossible for troops to pass through these cañons, in which they hide and cultivate the ground. In the main Cañon de Chelly they had some two or three thousand peach trees, which were mostly destroyed by my troops. Colonel Sumner, in the fall of 1851, went into the Cañon de Chelly with several hundred men and two pieces of artillery; he got into the cañon some eight or ten miles, but had to retreat out of it at night. In the walls of the cañon they have regular houses built in the crevices, from which they fire and roll down huge stones on an enemy. They have regular fortifications, averaging from one to two hundred feet from the bottom, with portholes for firing. No small-arms can injure them, and artillery cannot be used. In one of these crevices I found a two-story house. I regard these cañons as impregnable. General Canby entered this cañon, but retreated out the next morning. When I captured the Navajoes I first destroyed their crops, and harassed them until the snow fell very deep in the cañons, taking some prisoners occasionally. I think it was about the 6th of January, after the snow fell, that I started. Five thousand soldiers would probably keep them on reservations in their own country. The Navajoes had a good many small herds when I went there. I took twelve hundred sheep from them at one time, and smaller lots at different times. The volunteers were allowed one dollar per head for all sheep and goats taken, which were turned over to the commissary. I think General Carleton gave the order as an encouragement to the troops. I think from fifteen hundred to two thousand could subsist themselves in the Valley de Chelly. At this point it took me and three hundred men most one day to destroy a field of corn. I think probably fifteen hundred could subsist on the northeastern slope of the Tunacha mountain. I know of no other place near by where any considerable number could subsist themselves. I was in the valley of the San Juan, but can give no idea of the number that could subsist themselves in it. While I was in the country there was continual thieving carried on between the Navajoes and Mexicans. Some Mexicans now object to the settlement of the Navajoes at the Bosque, because they cannot prey on them as formerly. I am of the opinion that, in consequence of the military campaign and the destruction of their crops, they were forced to come in. It appears to me that the only objection to the Bosque is on account of the wood, which consists of mesquite roots; but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character of it to give an opinion of it, and the time it would last, but it is rather hard to dig. Many of the Apaches understand farming, and they should be put on a reservation. I think the Jicarilla Apaches would object to being put on the Bosque. The Apaches in Arizona, I think, would make very little objection to being placed on a reservation. With the Utes it would be more difficult, as they know nothing of planting, and when spoken to on the subject have invariably objected. They are a hardy, warlike people; they are of rather small size, but hardy, and very fine shots. I would not be, however, that they be put on a reservation, as they cannot live much longer as now; they are generally hungry, and killing cattle and sheep, which will bring on a war. They are now at peace, and it would be the wiser

policy to remain at peace with them. I think there is a good place for a reservation north of the San Juan in Utah. I think that justice demands that every effort should be made to secure peace with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes before any war was prosecuted against them, in view of the treatment they have received.

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