

SIUX INDIAN MATTERS.

The N. Y. Tribune of the 13th, publishes the following letter from Professor Marsh of Yale College, to President Grant—

"Sir—In two interviews I had with you on Indian affairs, I was impressed with your earnest desire to do justice to the Indians, and with your broad and philanthropic views on the whole Indian question. This must be my excuse, as a private citizen, for coming again to you, to lay before you statements of wrongs committed against the Sioux Indians, mainly under my own observation during a recent visit to their country. My visit to this region was wholly in the interests of science, with no intention or wish to investigate Indian affairs. The frauds I observed were brought to my knowledge by Red Cloud, who refused to allow my party to enter the bad lands until I had promised to submit his complaints to you in person.

"Since my interview with you on this subject I have been informed by the commissioner of Indian affairs, of the appointment of a commission to investigate affairs at the Red Cloud agency, and I am invited to lay a statement of the facts before them, which I am quite ready to do, whenever the commission requests it, but I must decline to give my statement to the Interior Department alone, for the following reasons: 1st, I have no confidence whatever in the sincerity of the Secretary of the Interior or of the Commissioner of Indian affairs when they publicly announce their wish and determination to correct the abuses in the Indian management, because I have reason to know that they have long been aware of these abuses and have made no sincere effort to reform them. 2nd, in all my intercourse with these two officials, their object has manifestly been to find out, not so much what the frauds actually were as the extent of my information concerning them, so as to prevent by every means in their power, all publicity or exposure of them; 3d, the evidence now in my possession reflects unfavorably on both Secretary Delano and Commissioner Smith, and for these reasons I have thought it best to lay before you, to whom, in accordance with my promise to Red Cloud, I made the first communication, the accompanying statement in detail, in full confidence that the evidence presented will meet the consideration which its importance demands.

"In the statement which accompanies this letter I have given the results of my investigation into affairs at the Red Cloud Agency, the largest and most important in the west; these results clearly indicate both mismanagement and fraud, especially in the following particulars:

"First—the agent, J. J. Saville, is wholly unfitted for his position, and is guilty of gross fraud upon the Indians in his charge.

"Second—The number of Indians at his agency has been systematically overstated for purposes which can only result in fraud.

"Third—The last issue of annuity goods, which I witnessed, was a suspicious transaction and, in part at least, fraudulent.

"Fourth—the beef cattle given to the Indians have been very inferior, owing to systematic frauds practised by the agent and beef contractors.

"Fifth—the pork issued to the Indians during my visit, was not suitable for human fare.

"Sixth—the flour was very inferior, and the evidence of fraud in this article was conclusive.

"Seventh—sugar and coffee issued were not good, although better than other supplies.

"Eighth—the tobacco observed was rotten, and of little or no use to Indians.

"Ninth—in consequence of fraud and mismanagement, the Indians suffered greatly the past winter for want of food and clothing.

"Tenth—the contract for freight from Cheyenne to the Red Cloud Agency was fraudulent, as the true distance is 145 miles, while the contractor was paid for 212 miles.

"I would especially call attention to the evidence of fraud in the beef cattle as presented in the accompanying statement. This subject I investigated with great care, as beef is the principal article of food of the Sioux Indians, and the frauds I observed had caused great suffer-

ing among them, as well as great pecuniary loss to the government.

"The statement I have prepared is supported in all its essential parts by the testimony of officers of the army who were with me and my expedition at the Red Cloud Agency. Among these officers are several personally known to you, and all gentlemen of high character. Should any part of my statement be seriously questioned I trust you will allow these gentlemen to be heard. If the commanding officers of all the posts near the agencies, or other equally trustworthy and disinterested observers there could likewise testify, I think it would be found that I have but faintly indicated the corruption pervading Indian affairs.

"I have purposed to confine myself in this statement to a single agency, and mainly to the time of visit, without reference to much other testimony which has come to me incidentally in the prosecution of my inquiries, showing frauds of equal magnitude at other points. This corruption is a constant source of discontent and hostility among the Indians themselves, and is, in my judgment, the natural result of the present loose and irresponsible system of furnishing Indians goods and supplies, a system that lies directly to invite fraud. I do not believe that anything but a radical change in this respect will prevent the continued demoralization of the Indian service. You have the will and the power to destroy that combination of bad men known as the Indian ring, who are debasing this service and thwarting the efforts of all who are endeavoring to bring to its full consummation your noble policy of peace.

"Very respectfully,
"Your obedient servant,
"O. C. MARSH.

The commissioner of Indian affairs makes the following statement in regard to the letter of Professor Marsh, published this a. m.:

"Some time ago Professor Marsh returned from a western tour, during which he visited the Red Cloud agency. About the time of his return numerous charges of misconduct in office against agent Saville, of the Red Cloud agency, which involved the character of the supplies and the manner of their distribution appeared in the liberal papers, all calculated, apparently, to affect the Indian office and the Interior Department. Prof. Marsh came to Washington and called upon me, and presented a sample of the supplies which he claimed came from Red Cloud, but which he had not verified personally. He did not call upon the Secretary of the Interior, nor did he communicate with him in writing. He was presented by the Postmaster General to the President, and reiterated these general and indefinite accusations. To all these the Secretary made no reply, as nothing had been presented to him definite enough to justify an answer. During the visit of the Sioux delegations to Washington in May last, Prof. Marsh made his appearance, and after remaining several days in the city without calling upon the Secretary, being informed that he was present at one of the Indian meetings he introduced himself and asked the Professor to call at his office; the Professor called and the Secretary requested him to give him in writing any grounds of complaint he might have against the Indian service at the Red Cloud Agency, in order that he might examine and investigate them. This the Professor declined to do. The Secretary had previously requested the Board of Indian Commissioners to appoint persons to investigate these vague and indefinite charges. Thus matters stood until the board, of which Clinton B. Fisk is president, was selected as commissioners to investigate Prof. Marsh's complaints. When the persons thus selected were appointed the Professor was notified by the commissioner of Indian affairs of the appointment, and he was very politely requested to furnish the Indian office or the commissioners any information in his possession, or any proof at his command to sustain any of the charges which he might feel disposed to make. The commission has been appointed consists of ex-Governor Fletcher, Benj. W. Harris, and Chas. J. Faulkner, and they will proceed to investigate Prof. Marsh's complaints. This statement of facts is due to Mr. Saville, the Red Cloud agent, to Professor Marsh himself, and to the Indian office."

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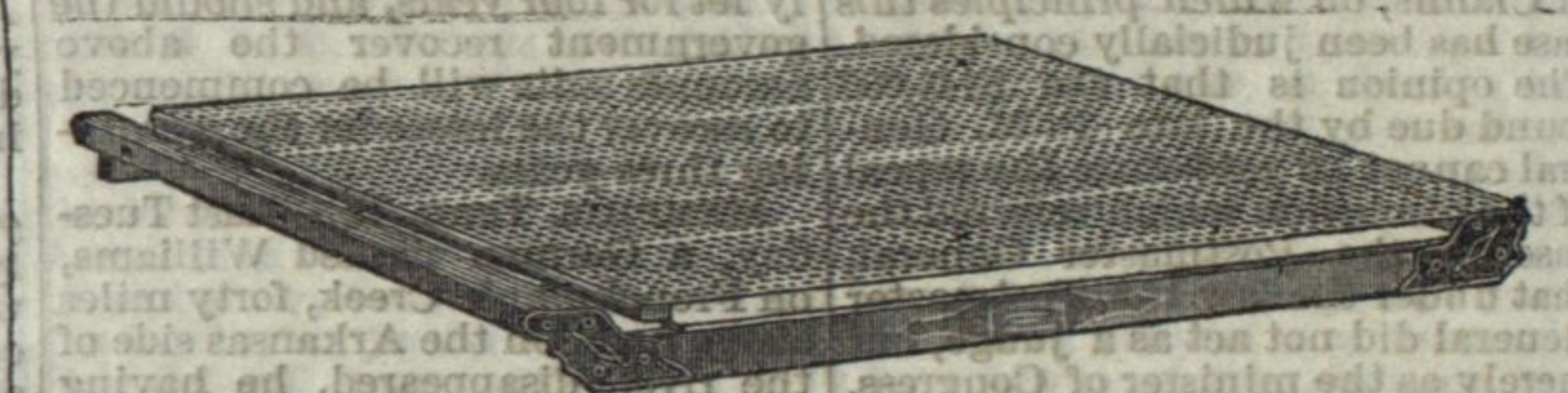
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