

and are enforced with a commendable degree of promptitude and impartiality.

Those against the introduction and sale of ardent spirits are very stringent; but in spite of all their efforts to prevent it, considerable quantities of intoxicating liquors are brought into the country, to the detriment and injury of a large number of the Indians.

The presence of the military at the neighboring post of Fort Gibson has heretofore operated as a check to this great evil; but this restraint having been withdrawn, by the breaking up of that post, it is feared that the nefarious traffic will increase; and without the assistance of the military, or some other suitable species of force, to which the agent can readily resort, it is impossible for him to arrest it. I regard the withdrawal of the troops from this vicinity as a matter of much importance to the future prospects of these Indians, and would view the re-establishment of a military post in this section of the country as a matter calculated to promote their welfare in many respects, by affording to the different agents, and other officers of the government, timely aid and assistance in the performance of their duties, and in enforcing the laws of the United States, and as being necessary to the preservation of the peace of the frontier.

According to the census recently taken of the Creeks, the entire tribe now numbers fourteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight souls, showing a very great decrease in the last twenty years. The number enrolled as emigrants to this country under and after the treaty of 1832 was, I am informed, about twenty-two thousand.

There were already here some three thousand who had emigrated previously; making the entire strength of the tribe in 1836, when the great body of it was removed, about twenty-five thousand.

This, to a considerable extent, was, doubtless, caused by the casualties of emigration and the hardships and exposure incident to settling in a new and wilderness country without the means of readily making themselves comfortable. It is understood that a very large number died on the route and during the first two or three years after their arrival. Another cause of their decrease has been the general prevalence among them of winter fever, (or, as it is called, pneumonia,) with which they are annually scourged; and this has been greatly increased by the delay in their annual payments until very late in the fall, or commencement of winter, when they have frequently to assemble to receive their moneys without any shelter or protection against the most inclement weather.

This has been a frightful source of this most fatal disease, which evil should be remedied by an earlier remittance and payment of their annual dues.

Whether the tribe is now increasing or decreasing I have no means of determining with any degree of certainty, no census of it, except the present one, having been taken for many years. From the best information I can obtain, however, I am inclined to the belief that it is now at about a stand.

Situated as they are in a fine country, which is generally healthy, they ought to increase. They have entirely abandoned the chase and devote themselves generally to the cultivation of the soil and the

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bringing about this desirable object, an interview was held this morning at the agency.

"Chino Peña," the spokesman of the party, contended that they were unjustly attacked by the troops in the late campaign; that they always regarded the Americans as their friends, and still desired to remain at peace with them.

The reasons why the troops were sent against them were explained and impressed upon them. They were told that they were implicated in the murder of Agent H. L. Dodge and others, on the Tucson road; and, also, that they had been stealing stock from Valencia county, &c. The evidence we had before, together with the admissions of "Chino Peña," does not leave a doubt as to their culpability.

He admits that some of their bad men may have been engaged in stealing, and that the murderer of Agent Dodge was in his camp when attacked by Colonel Bonneville, and that he was one of the killed. This fact alone justifies the attack upon them; but he admits, further, that some of his people had accompanied the Mogoyon Indians in an expedition last November, and were among those who killed some Pueblos and Mexicans at Cubero, and stole a large herd of sheep from the Puerco. This agrees with the information I received at the time from the Mimbres Indians, and was reported in a letter dated December, 1856, to the superintendency.

"Chino Peña" states that a grand council of the whole tribe of Coyotereros was held immediately after the fight upon the Gila, and that, after three days and three nights consultation, it was unanimously agreed that they would ask for peace.

He states that it never was the design of their principal men to have a difficulty with the Americans; but now, as they are into it, that he has been sent, to use his own expression, to (*emparesar el suelo*) ask for peace. All the captains from the Penal mountains east to the Mogollon were present at their council, and have authorised him, as their representative, to offer all their mountains, waters, wood, and grass, in exchange for peace. They also agree to give us possession of the celebrated Gold mountain of the Coyotereros.

They brought me at least a pound of what they supposed to be the precious metal, but which, upon examination, was found to be utterly worthless.

I mention this as an evidence of their sincerity. Believing them to be sincere in their wish to remain at peace, I have directed "Chino Peña" and one of his party to return to their people. I assured him that no further steps would be taken at present to chastise them, and that they had peace in their own hands. To tell the captains that we wanted none of their wood, water, mountains, or their gold, but that we desired peace; at the same time assuring them that the general commanding had informed me that, if depredations continued, a stronger force would be sent into their country than that which had just returned.

They were further assured that their prisoners would be kindly treated, and one of their number has remained here and has permission to visit them at Fort Fillmore.

Colonel Bonneville and Major Simonson were present at the inter-

view this morning, and fully concur in the belief that those Indians are sincere in their desire to be at peace.

"Chino Peña" has promised to return in about twenty days with some of the captains of his tribe, to have a further talk. At that time they will expect something more definite with regard to the return of their prisoners and our promise of peace.

I hope, therefore, to receive full instructions from the superintendent before that time; and if it is the design to return their prisoners, the superintendent will please see General Garland, commanding department, and get an order giving the Indian department control of them. The prisoners have suffered much from disease, and are still suffering, and will as long as they are confined. Six of their number have already died. It would therefore be an act of humanity to release them as soon as possible.

The Mimbres Indians and many of the Mogollon band are still in the republic of Mexico. I intend sending for the captains, so as to have a talk with them soon.

I will anxiously await your instructions to direct my future course.

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. STECK,

*Indian Agent.*

General JAMES-L. COLLINS,

*Superintendent Indian Affairs, New Mexico.*

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No. 126.

SANTA FÉ, NEW MEXICO, *September 22, 1857.*

DEAR COLONEL: Returning a few days since from the depôt on the Gila, I met your friend and agent, Doctor Steck. He made much inquiry respecting the Gila country; whether your views in regard to locating the Apache Indians in pueblos should be effected on the waters of the Gila. He appeared desirous that I should converse with you on the subject; he believed any information in relation to this hitherto unknown region would be deeply interesting, and perhaps some day might be useful in assisting the operations of your superintendency with these people.

We were operating in what has been known as the Gila country for more than four months; had detachments of troops scattered in every direction, bringing on their return sketches of the country and information from every quarter.

I established my depôt on the east bank of the Gila river, a beautiful spot about fifteen miles from the Mogollon mountains. This valley is about twenty-five miles by forty, basined by the Mogollon to the north, San Vicente to the east, the Burro and Almoque to the south, and to the west by the Patos and San Francisco.

These mountains enclose one of the most fertile and healthy spots on earth—beautiful to perfection. So much was it the admiration of