

Refer in reply to  
the following:

L  
1887.

# Department of the Interior,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

Washington, D. C.,

*October 29<sup>th</sup>*, 1887.

To the United States Indian Agent,

*Yakama* Agency.

SIR:

The following letter, relative to Indians leaving their reservations, was addressed to several of the United States Indian Agents, and is now communicated to you, with certain modifications, as hereinafter noted, for your guidance:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

Washington, D. C., February 2, 1887.

*The United States Indian Agent:*

SIR: The practice of Indians residing upon one reservation visiting those residing upon another, has proved a fruitful source of trouble and annoyance, resulting in the most deleterious and demoralizing effect upon both the visiting and visited Indians.

A notable instance of this character was the visit the past year of the Sioux Indian "Sitting Bull" and his followers to the Crow Indians in Montana, at a time when special agents of the Government were making allotments of land in severalty to the Crows, which resulted in the abandonment of the work for the present.

This practice must be broken up, and with that end in view, you are directed to inform and make plain to the Indians within your agency the fact that they will not be permitted to leave their reservation for the purpose of visiting Indians upon other reservations or for other purposes, except upon a pass or permit obtained from their Agent, and in case a desire is expressed to visit other reservations, then the consent to such visit must first be had and obtained from the Agent in charge of the reservation desired to be visited.

You will instruct your police officers to be vigilant and watchful, and in case it is found that Indians are visiting the reservation without the requisite authority and permission, it will be your duty to remove therefrom all such Indians and to at once so notify the Agent in charge of the reservation to which they belong, whose duty it shall be to take such steps and adopt such measures as may be found necessary to cause the return of the Indians to their reservation.

In case any considerable number of Indians desire to leave your reservation, then permission for that purpose should be obtained from this Department, but in ordinary cases you will exercise your own judgment, being governed by the instructions contained herein.

In case application is made by Indians to leave a reservation in bodies of considerable numbers, for any purpose, you will, in forwarding such application, state fully all the facts in the case, giving name and location of place to be visited; purpose of the proposed visit; the length of time the Indians desire to be absent, and whether the permit, if granted, would result to the benefit and advantage of the Indians, or otherwise, and at the same time caution the Indians not to leave the reservation until the permission for that purpose is received.

(OVER.)



The practice of Indians belonging to different reservations committing raids upon and stealing stock from each other, is an uncivilized and barbarous one and must be effectually broken up.

You will be required to keep a close watch upon the movements of the Indians belonging to your Agency, and in case it is found that they have been making raids or reprisals and have stolen property in their possession, you will use every effort and all possible diligence toward the recovery of the property and its return to the Agent in charge of the reservation from whence taken, to the end that it may be turned over to the proper owner. You will also take such steps as may be necessary to cause the arrest of the guilty parties and their delivery to the civil authorities in order that they may be proceeded against under the ninth section of the act of March 3, 1885 (Statutes at Large, Vol. 23, page 385).

You will be required to give these subjects the most careful attention, to the end that the practices named may be speedily and permanently broken up, and will make it your special duty to see that these instructions are complied with in every particular.

It should be forcibly impressed upon the minds of the Indians that the Government is in earnest in this matter, and that infractions of this order will result in the punishment of the guilty parties to the full extent of the law.

It is the earnest desire of the Government that the Indians give up their nomadic habits, settle upon lands in severalty, go to work and earn a living, educate their children and become intelligent, respected and worthy citizens. If they expect help they must make an earnest effort to help themselves; this they cannot do while roaming over the country, visiting other Indians, committing depredations and stealing stock.

Very respectfully,

J. D. C. ATKINS,  
*Commissioner.*

It has come to the knowledge of this Office that in some instances the provisions of the above order have been violated by Agents giving passes to Indians to leave their reservations with permission to visit other agencies without first having obtained the consent to such visit of the Agent in charge of the reservation desired to be visited, which has added greatly to the perturbed, unsettled, and turbulent state of affairs now existing on some of the reservations.

The foregoing order is, therefore, hereby modified so as to require all applications of Indians for permission to leave their reservations for any purpose to be submitted to this Office.

This order will not be considered as applying to Indians who desire to leave the reservation for the purpose of seeking a livelihood by performing labor for the whites or otherwise, or for the purpose of taking up and improving land outside a reservation.

In cases of this kind a pass from the Agent in charge will be sufficient, to be given, however, only when fully satisfied as to the honesty of purpose and *bona fide* intention of the applicant.

The attention of Agents is particularly directed to the duties enjoined upon them in the letter of February 2, 1887, which is above quoted, and which is still in force, except as herein modified, and they are directed to see that its provisions are scrupulously carried out, and are required to exercise extraordinary vigilance and supervision over the Indians to the end that, with the single exception above noted, they do not leave their reservation for any purpose without the requisite authority having first been obtained from this Office.

Very respectfully,

*J. D. C. Atkins*

*Commissioner.*



Dept. of the Interior.  
Washington Oct. 29, 1887

J. D. C. Atkins  
Com. of Ind. Affairs

Relating to Indians  
Leaving their Reservations,  
permit required from  
Indian Office except  
in certain cases

Rec<sup>d</sup> Nov. 7, 1887