

Refer in reply to the following

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Department of the Interior,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON, August 4th, 1881.

The Honorable
The Secretary of the Interior
Sir:-

I have the honor to be in receipt by Departmental reference of yesterday, for immediate report, of the following, touching the presence in Owyhee County Idaho, of Indians said to belong to Snake Valley reservation, in that Territory: 1st Report dated 26th ult. of the Governor of Idaho, as to his visit to Breneau Valley to ascertain the extent and nature of reported incursions of Indians in that section of Idaho;

The Governor's report of 26th ult. is sub-

stantially, that an Indian named "Bruneau John", with a band numbering in all about twenty Indians, was in Bruneau Valley; Bruneau John alleging that he was off his reservation by permission of his Agent (John Haw) because "the supplies of food and clothing furnished were inadequate to properly feed and clothe the Indians."

John also gave as his reason for leaving the reserve, that it was an unsuitable and uncongenial place for them, by reason of the long, cold winters, and that owing to this fact, and the deep snows, and early frosts prevailing there farming could not be successfully carried on, and, further, that "as his ancestors were born and had lived and died on the Bruneau he wished to return there to live & die."

The Governor says: "John has always been

"regarded as a good Indian; with a dis-
 "position to live at peace with the whites.

"In 1868, he served as a scout for Genl. Crook,
 "and during the Bannock war of 1878, he
 "rendered valuable service to the settlers in Bru-
 "neau and other portions of Owyhee County,
 "by giving timely warning of the approach
 "of the hostile Bannocks. This act of his,
 "no doubt saved many lives, and as it brought
 "down upon him the enmity of his tribe,
 "he is entitled to considerate treatment."

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The only other Indians reported by
 the Governor to be in Owyhee County
 were a band of Pintes, located near Big
 Springs two day journey from Bruneau Valley,
 and "numbering in all, bucks, squaws, and
 pappoosis, about forty two" - probably eight or

ten men at most - under the leadership of Panguitch and Big Jim, who assigned, substantially, the same reasons for leaving Deep Valley reserve as Bruneau John had assigned.

Of Panguitch, Governor Neil reports:
 "He too served as a scout for Genl. Crook in
 "1867, and 1868, and also rendered valuable service
 "to the settlers in Owyhee County in 1878, by
 "giving them notice of the Bannock outbreak.
 "He would not be molested by any person
 "in Owyhee County, but in his band are
 "two Indians, namely "Big Jim" and "Humpy,"
 "both of whom, it is believed were on the war
 "path with the Bannocks in 1878, and as long
 "as they are roaming over the country at will, the
 "settlers do not feel secure."

After a careful consideration of the matter, I am of opinion that there is at present

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no necessity for the action requested by Governor Neil, and that an order to remove the Indians in question under the circumstances, would be unwise.

If as stated by the military authorities the seventeen Indians (heads of families) now in Owyhee County, desire to enter land for their own use they not only have the right to do so under the Indian Homestead law, but their effort is entirely in accord with the policy which this office and the Department have been seeking to inaugurate and encourage, and the Indians in question should be protected in their efforts rather than removed, and I cannot resist the impression that if the Governor of Idaho will present the matter in its proper light to the inhabitants of Owyhee

County they will see that every consideration of gratitude and fair dealing demands that the Indians referred to are permitted to avail themselves of their rights, under the law, to take unappropriated public land for a home.

I have the honor therefore to recommend non compliance with the request of the Governor, and that the Hon. Secretary of War be requested to direct that the military authorities - who appear to be on the ground, make a thorough investigation as to the practicability of settlement by these Indians in the localities desired by them (Bonneau & Latharins Creeks) and whether they are in condition to avail themselves of the Indian Homestead law of March 3^d 1875, and that hereafter such further action be taken as the case may seem to demand.

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I enclose herewith the report and telegram of Governor Neil, together with the copy of telegram from the Commanding General, Department of Columbia, herein referred to, with the request that they may be returned to this office.

Since the foregoing was written I have received the enclosed letter from Agent How, dated July 26th. stating that, so far as known to his Indians, there are not fifteen Indians in Brumaw Valley, ten of whom went by request of Mr Robinson, a leading resident of the Valley, and, doubtless, the person at whose rancho Governor Neil camped on his recent visit, as stated in his letter.

Agent How also states that there are not more than ten settlers in

Brunnau Valley.

The return of his letter is respectfully
requested.

Very respectfully
Your obt. Servt
E. L. Stevens

Acting Commissioner

(Sgd)

Slack

Acting Commissioner
to Secretary of the
Interior in reference to
ranching rights said by
Gov. Neil of Idaho to be
in Owyhee County O.T.

Aug-1881