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Navajo

Ft Defiance Ariz Feby 8th 4

Hon J. C. Willett
Deputy U.S. Marshal
Farmington N.M.

Dear Sir:-

Your communication under date January 30th 1884 has been carefully read and I have to thank you heartily for the information conveyed. I have been greatly perplexed by the situation up in your section and by my inability to visit it at present owing to the press of duty in this quarter. During the past year I have visited nearly every portion of the country occupied by the Navajos and had intended to go up your way just as soon as I could get around to it.

I am now ordered East with

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a party of chiefs on this very question of land. I ordered the Navajos from all directions to come on the reservation. Now the Indians know, and so do I, that it is impossible for them to live on the reservation under present conditions. There isn't water enough. I have ridden sixty miles without seeing a drop of water, up to the north and west of here. But I had to order them all on to avoid the troubles growing out of the influx of emigration: such as you had up your way. I thought it wise to order the Indians inside of the limits set for them and leave the question of existence to be settled afterward by more powerful heads. But you know, and I know, the Navajos will never

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sit down quietly and starve. nor will they contentedly see their stock starve. Other thoughts will come into their heads and it isnt hard for a frontiersman to make up his mind what those thoughts will be. I have had to deal with the question of reservation lines several times during the past year, and it is a singular fact, that in almost every instance, the cry to put them on the reservation, came from men who were governed by some selfish motive; and in nearly every instance those men were converting grass into dollars by herding their stock on the reserve.

I myself am in favor of placing the Indians within bounds and keeping them there. The people who

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know me know my methods of dealing with them and that I will not stand any nonsense from an Indian; but I think with you that an Indian has at least as much right on unoccupied and unsurveyed portions of the public domain as have unnaturalized foreigners. The Indian is certainly on lands owned and hunted over by his fathers from time immemorial and if there is any such thing as natural rights he certainly has them. In some cases the Indian stands in the way of advancing civilization and it seems expedient to allot them smaller limits; but with the Navajos, nearly all of the country I have seen and which they ask for, is a barren sandstone desert only fit to graze their scrub-

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sheep.

I will feel grateful to you if you will keep me posted as to all matters of interest in connection with these Indians. I may be partial but after fifteen years continuous residence amongst the different Tribes of the west I think them the best by all odds.

If you can send me a map with proposed addition on the East (taking in Cañon Gallegos) I will be under many obligations. I would like to have it sent to me at Washington - Care of Commissioner of Indian Affairs -. I will take the liberty of showing your letter to the Honorable Secretary of the Interior. I am

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certain he will be very much intes-
" ested.

With hearty thanks I subscribe
myself Very Truly Yours
D. M. Riordan
U. S. Indian Agent.