N. Mexico No 486

Govr of New Mexico
Santa Fe July Dy 55

Enc. treaty made with the Navajo Indians on the 18. inst. at Laguna Negra, or Black Lake, and notes of a talk with those Indians

For "Talk" see File-box = "Indian Talks - Councils" &c. &c

Recd September 1. '55

Ackn Sept 5. 1855

See Report to Secretary of Interior December 18th 55 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] 462

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Office Dept. of Ind. Affs.
Santa Fe N. Mexico
July 21st 1855.

Sir:

I have the honor, herewith, to enclose you a treaty, concluded by me, with the Navajo Indians on the 18th inst. at Laguna Negra (or Black Lake) under your general instruction of the 16th of March last, and hope that its provisions may meet your approval.

There was a very full attendance of the warriors of the tribe; the number could not have been less than fifteen hundred, and several officers of the army, who were present, estimated them at two thousand; but few of their women and children were present and every man was mounted on his horse and well armed. I was particular in ascertaining whether the chiefs, captains, and head men were authorized, by their followers, to enter into negotiations, and conclude a treaty with me; and after the treaty was reduced to writing, to ascertain if there was any objections on the part of the Indians present, and but one

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descending voice was heard, and that proved to be on the part of a man of but little note or consequence.

Every band except that of Sandoval, was fully represented, and every chief, Captain and head man, except Sandoval signed the treaty willingly after understanding its purport fully, and after a long conference with their followers. Sandoval's band numbers about one hundred souls, who separated from the remainder of the tribe some years since, and the two parties are decidedly hostile to each other; which separation and hostility grows out of the fact of this little band having refused to joine with the remainder of the tribe in hostilities against the whites, as I am informed. During these Navajo hostilities, a small Mexican settlement called Sebolleta was broken up or abandoned, and Gov. Calhoun gave Sandoval and his party permission to occupy it, which they have done up to this time, cultivating the soil with some degree of success. But I am informed that the former occupants of this settlement claim the land under a Mexican grant, which will render it necessary to provide for Sandoval and his followers in some other quarter, unless this grant

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be purchased by the government which I would strongly recommend, for if these Indians are required to remove west of the mountains few will survive long.

The Navajo tribe is generally estimated to number from fifteen hundred to two thousand warriors, and from eight to ten thousand souls, and from the number assembled at Lagund Negra I am of the opinion that this is not too large an estimate, and the country assigned to them, by the treaty, is estimated to contain about seven thousand square miles. This reservation embraces the present planting grounds of these Indians, and was selected by them; but from my own observation, in traveling through it, and the best information which I could gather, the entire reservation does not contain over one hundred and twenty five or thirty square miles susceptible of cultivation, and this is in small detached portions, situated in the gorges of the mountains, along the borders of the little streams which afford water for irrigation. The right to gather salt at the Lake near Zuñi is important to the Indians and can not interfere with any vested right, as this Lake is not contained within the grant held by the Pueblo of Zuñi; and

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and by the laws of Mexico and Texas all salt Lakes in New Mexico are reserved and made common to all the inhabitants thereof.

To enable you to understand the eastern boundary of this reservation, refer to Parker's map of New Mexico which I enclosed to you during the last winter, there draw a line from the head of the Canadian to the head of the Pecos river or creek, which will give you the true position of the ridge which divides the waters of the Rio Grande from those of the Pecos stream, which is a well defined boundary, well understood by the Indians.

The annuities proposed to be paid to the Navajos are not so large in proportion to numbers as the amounts stipulated to be paid to the Southern Apaches, but the amounts contained in the Navajo treaty were satisfactory to them; the country ceded is not so valuable, and the necessities of these Indians does not require the payment of a larger sum annually to enable them to live in comfort and improve their condition. Indeed, these Indians may now be considered in a

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prosperous condition; they have a large number of horses and sheep, together with other domestic animals; have planted some four thousand acres of grain this season, and by another year will be able to raise a sufficient amount to feed the whole tribe plentifully, after which time I hope that they will have a surplus sufficient to supply the wants of Fort Defiance, which now has to be hauled over one hundred miles at great cost to the government.

The last paragraph of my letter of the 26th of June last, enclosing the Apache treaties, relative to an early action on the part of the executive and Senate, is equally applicable to the one enclosed, and I cannot urge this point in too strong terms, but as I expect to visit Washington by the 1st of December next I hope to have the pleasure of doing this in person.

I regret the necessity of sending you so important a document with so many erasures and interlineations, and my only apology is that the Indians became so impatient to depart to their homes, as to render it impossible to detain them long enough to enable

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us to make a more perfect copy, and the one enclosed had to be written in a tent during the prevalence of a heavy storm without a chair or table.

I also enclose you the substance of the talk between myself and the Navajos on the subject under negotiation.

I have the honor to be
Very respectfully
Your Obt. Servt.
D. Meriwether Govr
and Supt of I.A. in N.M.

Hon. C. W. Mannypenny
Commr of Ind. Affs.
Washington City
D.C.

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