

Instructions to [blank] superintendant of Indian affairs [i.e. affairs] for the [blank] Department.

INSTRUCTIONS *to Superintendant of Indian Affairs for the Department.*

SIR,

THE United States in Congress assembled having been pleased to appoint you to the important office of Superintendant of Indian affairs for the you will have every inducement that such high confidence can inspire, to exert yourself to fulfil their just expectations.

The ordinance of Congress for the regulation of Indian affairs, passed the 7th of August, 1786, and such other regulations as they may hereafter think proper to establish, are to be the governing principles of your conduct, and you are to enjoin an exact observance thereof on your deputies.

Many important considerations render it necessary that the United States should be at peace with the Indians, provided it can be obtained and preserved consistently with the justice and dignity of the nation. You will therefore immediately endeavour to ascertain the causes which have influenced the Indians to the commission of the murders on the frontiers, and to report the same. In this business it will be necessary not only to mark precisely the grounds of the present evils, but to ascertain the remedies, if any, which are within the power of the union, short of actual hostilities. The United states are fixed in their determination, that justice and public faith shall be the basis of all their transactions with the Indians. They will reject every temporary advantage obtained at the expence of these important national principles. But while they evince this determination by their conduct, they will not suffer unprovoked aggressions, with impunity, even from savages.

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Justice forbids the United States from being guilty of oppression; but at the same time it dictates that their peaceable citizens shall be protected in their lawful pursuits.

Let the Indians know that their just complaints shall be listened to with attention, and the causes removed; but that their murders shall be punished.

Being impressed with the main objects of the public, you will conform all your negotiations accordingly, by conciliating the affections of the several tribes, and fixing their confidence in the friendship of the United States.

It is the desire of Congress to obtain full information of all the Indian tribes within the limits of the United States, and such others as may inhabit the country bordering thereon. You will therefore endeavour to ascertain their numbers and characters, and as far as possible the characters of the chiefs of each tribe; their particular residence, and the district which they occupy for their general hunting grounds. The quantity and quality of furs taken annually; the usual price and markets at which they are sold, and the kind of payments which are received.

The commerce with the Indians will be an object of importance, and ought to be cultivated by all proper means. As no traders will be suffered, without a licence from you, or your deputies, it will be necessary that you should be attentive to their characters and conduct, as the preservation of peace will depend in a considerable degree on the fairness of their transactions. Any complaints of the Indians against the traders, must be enquired into, and if just, redressed without delay.

You will report the number of traders whom you annually license, the states they are from, and the districts in which they are to trade.

Humanity and policy will dictate that you endeavour to obtain an early release of all the citizens of the United States, who have been or may be captured by the Indians.

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You will fix and maintain a constant friendly correspondence with the chief of the several nations within your district, and make them occasional presents of such articles as may be in your possession for that purpose by the orders of Congress. But this business must be regulated by the highest discretion. The circumstances of the United States will not admit of their entering into a competition with the practice of the British nation in this respect. The presents must therefore be in proportion to the importance of the characters and the public means.

It may so happen that some Indian chiefs may wish to repair to Congress; in this case, and you should be of opinion that the national interest would be thereby promoted, you will forward them at the public expence, with proper interpreters and credentials. But as this business will be considerably expensive, you will suffer it only on important occasions.

You will hold general and particular treaties from time to time, agreeably to the orders of Congress, the objects of which will be specified. You will also hold such occasional treaties and councils as, in your opinion, shall be necessary for to promote the public interests, reporting always to this office the time, place, objects and effects of such treaties or councils.

You will employ, occasionally, such interpreters, messengers and laborers, as the business of your department shall demand, and agree for their pay; provided always that you report the same to this office and the board of treasury.

The commanding officer of the troops in the United States on the frontiers, will have orders to concur with you to promote the common interest, by furnishing you with escorts or guards for yourself, and the public property in your charge, and rendering such assistance as in his opinion may be necessary, and the state of his command can afford.

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It may be proper for you to encourage some young white men to reside among the Indian tribes to learn their language and customs; and some young Indians to repair to schools in different states, to learn the language and customs of the United States.

A constant and regular communication of all your observations and transactions to this office, for the information of Congress, will be highly necessary, and must be performed with punctuality.

It has been thought proper to give you these instructions for your general government; particular instructions may be forwarded from time to time. But much must be left to your prudence, fidelity and judgment. The business confided to your management is highly responsible, and requires an intimate knowledge of human nature as well as of the habits, customs and particular views of the Indians.

You will undoubtedly endeavour to perform the duties of your office in such a manner as to merit the approbation of Congress.

Given at the War-Office of the United States this day of

Instructn to Indian Agent Mr. Johnson