

# GOVERNOR RAMSEY'S MESSAGE.

## The Indian Outbreak in Minnesota.

### Recommendations for its Suppression and the punishment of the Savages.

Governor Ramsey's message to the Minnesota Legislature presents a correct history of the recent Indian outbreak in that State, together with some excellent suggestions concerning the indemnity and security to be exacted from the savage perpetrators. We make the following extracts:

A few weeks previous to the outbreak, a menacing demonstration had occurred at the upper agency, where the Indians had prematurely assembled in large numbers in anticipation of the payment of their annuities, but which on account of the tardy appropriations by Congress, had been unusually delayed. But this disturbance had been promptly allayed by the exertions of the Indian agent, Mr. Galbraith, and the Indians had been sent away to their villages apparently satisfied with his assurance that the money would soon be received, when they should be sent for. So assured was Mr. Galbraith of their pacific disposition, so unsuspecting of any possible danger of a hostile outbreak, that leaving his family in their midst at Yellow Medicine, he had, on the Friday (the 15th of August,) before the revolt, started for Red Wood with a company of recruits, and was on his way to Fort Snelling, when he was recalled by the intelligence of a general massacre of the whites on the Reservation.

The blow indeed had fallen with appalling suddenness.

On the 17th of August, four miscreants, it is said, of Little Six's band, made their appearance at Acton, Meeker county, where they murdered a family of six persons. The assassins fled to Red Wood, where fearful of being delivered up to punishment, they may have sought their own safety by instigating a general revolt. Perhaps this was the first step in the development of a partial conspiracy—comprising one or more bands. At any rate, their bloody example, and incendiary arguments concurring with previous causes of disaffection, the defenseless state of the white inhabitants, and the tempting prospect of plunder from the well stored warehouses, seems to have fired the slumbering mine of hate and treachery so long masked under no appearance of friendship. The sanguinary contagion spread from band to band, and on the morning of the 18th, in a moment, without a word or sign of warning, without preconcert on their part, or provocation on ours, all the innate ferocity of this savage race was let loose at once on the unsuspecting white inhabitants, and men, women and children were involved in an indiscriminate and awful massacre. A force of forty-five soldiers, which had been sent up from Fort Ridgely, on the first rumor of disturbance, arrived only to be attacked in ambush and half their number, with their leader, slain. The horrible work of murder, pillage and destruction begun at Red Wood was swiftly extended throughout the Sioux Reservation, and the adjacent settlements where the families, living in isolated habitations at considerable distances apart, afforded an easy prey to the skulking foe. Hundreds of every age and sex perished by the hands of these remorseless butchers.

Hundreds who narrowly escaped, fled to Fort Ridgely, New Ulm, St. Peter, and other towns for protection, and the fearful tidings which they bore spread universal consternation among the people. Tens of thousands, including many far from the scene of danger, fled with their families from this sudden, unseen, and stealthy foe, against whom all ordinary precautions seemed vain, leaving their crops to perish in the fields, and their property to pillage. The towns and cities could scarcely afford even shelter to this crowd of frightened fugitives.

When the first vague news of the revolt at Red Wood was received on the evening of the 19th, I hastened immediately to Fort Snelling, and ordered four companies of the 6th regiment, which had just been organized, to march at once to the scene of reported disturbance, and Hon. H. H. Sibley, whose residence for thirty years on the frontier, and intimate familiarity with the Indian character and modes of warfare, indicated a special fitness for the service, was designated to the command.

On the 21st, when authentic information of the extent and character of the outbreak was first received, accompanied with the announcement that New Ulm had been attacked in force, and Fort Ridgely beleaguered, another force of seven companies was instantly sent forward under Col. Crooks, with orders to report to Col. Sibley. At the same time mounted volunteers were called upon by proclamation, to join the forces moving up the Minnesota Valley. This call was responded to with generous alacrity by about 500 mounted citizens.

While these bodies were moving up the valley, companies of mounted men and infantry were sent as rapidly as they could be raised and equipped, for the protection of the sparsely settled districts of country lying north and south of the scene of the Sioux depredations on the Minnesota River, which seemed to be exposed to incursions of marauding parties from that quarter.

In the meantime, the Chippewas had assumed a threatening attitude, for reasons not now distinctly understood, but which, from its conjuncture with the Sioux raid, gave rise, at the moment, to a widespread apprehension that these inveterate enemies had buried the hatchet in a league against the whites. The Chippewa agent, Mr. Walker, having failed in an attempt to arrest the chief, Hole-in-the-Day, fled to Fort Ripley, under an impression that a general massacre was to be attempted.

In consequence of this threatening disposition, the citizens of various exposed localities on the Chippewa border were as far as possible supplied with arms and ammunition, and detachments of troops, including companies of mounted citizens, were sent for the protection of the St. Croix, Rum River, and Upper Mississippi Valleys. Four companies were sent to Fort Ripley, where the commissioner of Indian Affairs, Mr. Dole, who had come to the State for the purpose of effecting a treaty with the Chippewas of Red Lake, undertook the task of restoring order among this tribe.

No depredations, however, have as yet been committed by the Chippewas, and if they ever entertained any hostile intentions, which is doubtful, it is likely that the efforts of Commissioner Dole, backed by the ample preparations made to enforce his authority, will be sufficient to ensure their quiet.

Our new volunteers, though brave, are as yet inexperienced, and in other respects ill prepared for the active service into which they have been ordered. The want of disciplined troops being early felt, the 3d Minnesota then on parole at St. Louis, was at my request ordered to report here. They arrived on the 4th inst., and were instantly dispatched under Major Welch to the scene of hostilities.

In the meantime the progress of the Indians appeared to be checked.

On the 24th day of August, New Ulm, into which a body of citizens under Judge Flandrau, had thrown themselves for the protection of its inhabitants, was relieved by a detachment of Col. Sibley's troops, after having most bravely fought and repulsed the enemy in a severe battle on the preceding day. The place was then evacuated in order to convey the women and children who had fled thence for refuge, to the number of 2,000, to a place of permanent safety.

On the 26th, Fort Ridgely was relieved by a volunteer force of mounted citizens, under Lieut. Col. McPhail, sent forward by Col. Sibley, who arrived next day with his whole force.

They found the brave little garrison nearly exhausted with the labors and vigils which they had undergone in their heroic defense of that weak post for a period of nine days, during which they had sustained and repulsed three several desperate attacks in force. A number of brave men fell in these encounters.

who generously accompanied him for the relief of Fort Ridgely, having disbanded when that object was attained, with the exception of about ninety men.

A large organized body of cavalry was considered indispensable for an effective campaign, and at my urgent request after many delays, the president has been pleased to authorize the raising and equipment of a thousand mounted troops. The United States quartermaster stationed here is authorized to purchase horses for this regiment, and I trust that his speedy execution of this order will enable us to press our operations against the Sioux.

I have thus far given only so much of the history of our Indian disturbances as was required to show the measures adopted for their suppression and the general scope of our military operations, for details of which I must refer you to the report of the adjutant general, and the official dispatches of the officers commanding the various detachments, which will be transmitted to you.

But this review of the Sioux revolt would be incomplete, without some further reference to the singular atrocities which have marked its course, and to the mischief inflicted upon our people.

The sudden and treacherous outbreak of savage cruelty, which in one sudden blow struck down their friends and neighbors of another men, and revelled in a general massacre of men, women and children, has been alluded to.

But massacre itself had been mercy, if it could have purchased exemption from the revolting circumstances with which it was accompanied. Nothing which the brutal lust and wanton cruelty of these savages could wreak upon their helpless and innocent victims, was omitted from the category of their crimes.

Helplessness and innocence indeed which move pity in any breast but their theirs, seemed to inspire them only with a more ferocious rage.

Infants torn into bloody chips of flesh, or nailed alive to door posts to linger out their little life in mortal agony, or torn untimely from the womb of the murdered mother and in cruel mockery cast in fragments on her pulseless and bleeding breast; rape joined to murder in one awful tragedy; young girls, even children of tender years, outraged by their brutal ravishers till death ended their shame and sufferings; women held in captivity to undergo the horrors of a living death; whole families burned alive; and, as if their devilish fury could not glut itself with outrages on the living, its last efforts exhausted in mutilating the bodies of the dead, such are the spectacles, and a thousand nameless horrors besides, which their first experience of Indian war has burned into the brains and hearts of our frontier people, and such the enemy with whom we have to deal.

It is estimated that 500 persons of every age and sex perished, and more than perished, by the hands of these remorseless butchers in the course of the two or three days succeeding the outbreak, before their progress was checked by our forces; and hundreds of them lie yet unburied where they fell, hidden in the grass and bushes of prairies and ravines.

Many doubtless in the attempt to escape, have become lost, or fainting from exhaustion and terror, have died of starvation.

The theatre of depredations as far as ascertained, has extended from Otter Tail Lake and Fort Abercrombie, on the Red River, to the Iowa boundary, or a front of 200 miles, and from the western border of the State eastwardly to its heart at Forest City, an area of 20,000 square miles.

The property destroyed or carried off as booty, is estimated at millions of dollars, including large supplies of arms and ammunition pillaged from the government and private stores on the reservation, and the cattle, horses and household effects of settlers.

The indirect damage to our citizens is vastly greater, and if we include its probable effects on our future prosperity is beyond calculation.

Tens of thousands of acres of crops, which comprised all the wealth of their owners, have thus been abandoned to destruction, and thousands of prosperous and happy families reduced at one blow to poverty and often to beggary.

Throughout the whole district embracing the counties of Brown, Cottonwood, Fairbault, Jackson, and other counties in the Southwest, through the beautiful lake country of Kandiyohi, Douglas, Monongalia, Meeker, McLeod, a large part of Stearns and Wright, and throughout the new settlements in the Red River valley—but a few days since the abode of busy and happy communities—desolation and solitude now reign supreme; erit any remain, it is in fear and terror—armed against surprise—suspicious of every shadow that falls upon the grass—the log cottage loop-holed for defense—and the peaceful village turned into a fortified post. The danger may be exaggerated, but the effect is too real.

Brown county, adjacent to the Sioux Reservation, has felt the worst effects of this calamity. It was peopled chiefly by Germans, and their neat cottages and fine farms gave evidence of the superior thrift and industry which distinguish this class of our foreign citizens. Driven from their homes—their property destroyed or plundered—robbed even of their household goods—many of them mourning wives, husbands, children, and parents murdered—their beautiful and busy town of New Ulm, and their own homes, a blackened heap of ruins—these poor fugitives, many of whom cannot speak our language, are especially deserving of our sympathies.

In all, probably not less than 30,000 people are involved directly or indirectly in the loss of life or loss of property from pillage, destruction or abandonment.

The towns and villages have been and are now overrun with fugitives reduced to penury, many of them without food or clothing except what is furnished by public and private charity. To relieve the temporary wants of these people, for which the resources of private bounty were inadequate, I authorized Capt. Berkeley, of St. Paul, Hon. Henry A. Swift of St. Peter, and Mr. Bissett, Minneapolis, to provide subsistence and shelter for the time being, at the expense of the State.

The numbers of Indian warriors actually engaged in the raid, as far as known, would seem inadequate to the infliction of so much havoc and terror, if they had not been aided by the suddenness of the outbreak, the peculiar secrecy and rapidity of movement which characterizes their mode of warfare, the sparsely settled character of the country, and I may add, the singular violence and audacity with which, encouraged by the panic produced by their appearance, they have ventured into the heart of our settlements. Most of the depredations have, it is believed, been committed by small parties of marauders. The number of Indians engaged in the demonstrations before Fort Ridgely and New Ulm was estimated at only from 350 to 500. The whole number of Minnesota, or annuity Sioux, (men, women and children,) is about 7,200, which, it is possible might furnish 1,200 warriors.

In view of these provisions, it cannot be doubted that the Dakota nation has, by its flagrant violation of its treaty obligations, fully and entirely exonerated the government from all corresponding duties on its part. If this be true, so far as the Sioux nation is concerned, the day of annuities and Indian payments in Minnesota is past. The government will doubtless refuse to pay any further sums under the treaty to the offending tribes, but the act which has absolved it from this duty has created another by the destruction of property by acts against the occurrence of which the government had given the guarantee. It is believed that the authorities at Washington will deny neither the equity nor the legality of this claim when the same shall, as I trust it promptly will, be urged upon their attention, but, while escaping from all future obligations to those tribes, will surrender their claims as only transferred to the sufferers by their depredations.

These annuities thus forfeited by the Sioux amount in all, in goods, moneys, and other classes of expenditures, to about \$2,000,000.

I recommend and urge that you earnestly memorialize Congress and the department to use this sum to promptly indemnify those whose property has been destroyed or pillaged by these Indians, and for the support of the widows and orphans of those who have fallen at their hands. I do not doubt that if proper representations are made, that this just compensation can be secured.

In the extremity to which our military reverses have reduced the nation it is in vain to expect any immediate or sufficient protection from the general government. The material of war, and means for the payment and subsistence of troops, will doubtless be furnished us sooner or later through the regular channels of military supply; but the required assistance, as it does not come within the general system of military operations, under the eye of our generals, we may expect will often come tardily and without system, too slowly and irregularly for the prompt and decisive action required for the peculiar exigencies of our situation.

We must, therefore, for the present, depend upon our own resources to make good to our citizens the protection which the general government owes them, and it is to this end chiefly that I have called you together. Considerable expenditures may be necessary for this purpose, but they must be regarded as a loan to the government, which having failed to prevent this outbreak, and having as yet no direct measures to suppress it, has virtually left us, indeed has expressly authorized us, to adopt on its behalf the measures necessary for our effectual protection.

Our course then is plain. The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State.

The public safety imperatively requires it. Justice calls for it. Humanity itself outraged by their unutterable atrocities demand it. The blood of the murdered cries to heaven for vengeance on these assassins of women and children. They have themselves made their annihilation an imperative social necessity. Faithless to solemn treaty obligations, to old friendships, to the ties of blood, regardless even of self interest when it conflicts with their savage passions, incapable of honor, of truth, or of gratitude; amenable to no law; bound by no moral or social restraints—they have already destroyed in one monstrous act of perfidy, every pledge on which it was possible to found a hope of ultimate reconciliation.

They must be regarded and treated as outlaws. If any shall escape extinction, the wretched remnant must be driven beyond our borders, and our frontier garrisoned with a force sufficient to forever prevent their return.

So entirely have they destroyed all confidence among our people in the securities of life and property in the neighborhood of Indians, that much as many might regret it, it will doubtless be necessary sooner or later to remove the Winnebagoes, now dwelling in the heart of one of our most populous and beautiful agricultural districts, beyond the borders of the State.