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Letter from Thomas McKenney to George Sibley, April 7, 1821

Thomas McKenney

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George C. Sibley Esq
Ft Osage

Office in the
April 7 - 1831

Sir,

I have just now received yours of the 26 Jan^y last, with its enclosures. I note your remarks on the several several subjects of this letter. I know not how it is that the traders are able to command at St. Louis their supplies at the low rates you specify. I had been unable in New York to command the proper kinds of Blankets & cloths for the annuity and the six nations this year; & last year neither New York or Philad^a could serve me. It is true, goods at lower prices, and of a corresponding quality, could be had, but they were such as would do the Indians no good. Hence I resorted to the depot, wherein I store, as I can command the justable articles, ^{for} the supplies for the trade. However, it would be prudent, & but justice to the Gov^t. designed which are to withdraw the Indians from all other kinds of influences, & place them under its own, that you manage your sales with reference to this object. When you find it necessary therefore, for no matter what reasons, but especially in the way of competition to reduce your prices, it would be well for you to do so, I suppose therefore under the present state of things, of your proposal, & authorize you to sell if you can do no better; and if to do this will be necessary to preserve your influence with the Indians, to come down with your prices even to the cost & charges, but in the charges if possible to include the salary of yourself and assistant.

I had concluded to send new goods to the Factory on Osage River.

Your reasoning is very correct on the subject of the power & the mode of applying which it requires

required to raise heavy taxes, and the fact is
certain that a little will out there that which
it has required much to build up. Our Indians
owe much of their misery to the half way
policy of the Congress. They have never been
looked upon as meriting as much of the time
of that body as they certainly have a right to
claim, and as justice has long since claimed for them.

I will send you the medicine chest if it is
to be had. Poor Emell has gone to the wall as
it is ^{said} sometimes of broken merchants. He merited
a better fate. -

You were only sharers of the affliction of the
east. The Influenza ravaged our region, & afflicted
us all. Our winter has been severe beyond any
former visitations of the kind at least for 40 years.
We have had the winter of the Canadas. - ^{Thank}

3 You had better send out
things to the Indians to come
in, & see the cheapness of your goods. -