

UTAH TERRITORY.

RESOLUTION

OF

HON. JOHN BIDWELL,

RELATIVE

*To affairs in Utah Territory.*

FEBRUARY 25, 1867.—Referred to the Committee on Territories and ordered to be printed.

*Resolved*, That the Committee on Territories be instructed to inquire into the necessity of having a larger military force stationed in Utah Territory in order to protect the people against Indian hostilities and other outrages; to preserve order when the civil authority shall fail or prove inadequate to any condition or emergency demanding such aid; and, generally, to secure the execution of the laws of the United States in said Territory. Also, what additional number of troops and what legislation, if any, are required to accomplish the objects above named, and meet the wants and condition, present as well as prospective, of said Territory.

JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MISSOURI, *February* —, 1867.

DEAR SIR: Your letter of January 11, from Washington, requesting a report of my observations upon affairs in Utah while there in October last, is received, and the following is submitted as a summary of facts that appeared most prominent:

The Mormons reached Utah nineteen years ago last autumn, numbering about five thousand men, women, and children. They now number, in the Great Basin, about one hundred thousand. Their ratio of increase is an increasing one; that is, the proportional increase to their number is each year greater. Last season they brought from abroad about five thousand. The number they bring on is only limited by their ability to care for them until they become self-supporting. Their systems, in this respect, as well as in everything else, seems very complete. The newly arrived families are subsisted the first winter from the "church tithes," during which time their farms are surveyed and apportioned, material secured for buildings, seed and teams furnished, and in the spring each goes quietly and industriously at his own work on his own apportioned land. Their settlements are principally along the foot of the west slope of the Wasatch mountains; but in the south of Utah they reach across it, and near the Colorado river. This strip is nearly six hundred (600) miles long from north to south, is composed of numerous narrow valleys, and if all the tillable land could be put

in one piece it would not exceed, nor vary far from, ten miles in width the entire length. By taking in all the agricultural lands to the Sierra Nevadas, not including mineral lands, the area that can be cultivated may be doubled, but not more. I think we now have a limit to their expansion, granting that they cannot get a footing in California, nor in the mining and pastoral countries of Montana and Idaho. Belgium supports one person to  $1\frac{6}{10}$  acres of arable land. The Grand Duchy of Baden supports one to  $2\frac{7}{10}$  of her whole area, while Bavaria supports one to four acres of her entire area. Taking the limit of Utah at one to every two acres of its tillable land, we have a limit of about four millions as the maximum of their ability for expansion without encroachments, which can hardly be considered probable. Their wealth and influence, I believe, will enable them to absorb all the agricultural lands in the Great Basin whenever they may need it.

No agriculture is possible without artificial irrigation. The numerous bold springs from the Wasatch and other mountains, and Bear and other rivers, which can be taken out of their beds, will enable them to irrigate about the amount of land before described, but not more; in fact, the amount of land they can cultivate depends entirely on their ability to irrigate. They have very little timber, but are finding coal and excellent stone for building purposes, and this lack will be no hindrance to their prosperity. Their lands raise the small grains, fruits, and nearly all vegetables in the greatest profusion; while their flocks of sheep, herds of cattle and horses, show a great degree of success in stock-raising. They are now producing an abundance of sorghum sugar, and cotton-raising in the south of the Territory has been successful. The laboring people are nearly all foreigners, who have brought with them their close systems of agriculture, and they invariably evince a remarkable earnestness in their work and faith.

I would call their government a theocratic despotism. Brigham Young—or as he is called there President Young—is at the head of church and state, and is the supreme and absolute ruler in everything, temporal and spiritual. The civil officers of our government appointed there have no power whatever, and their positions I found in the highest degree contemptible. I conversed freely with nearly all of them. They were fully conscious of their insignificance.

The church (which is also the state) is very completely organized, with a system of high councilmen, bishops, priests, and wardens, that extends to every hamlet, and controls the actions and influences the thoughts of every individual. From the pulpit the people are directed how to sow their crops, how to worship God, and for whom to vote—all in the same sermon. Implicit obedience is their first rule.

I found Brigham Young a man of remarkable shrewdness, administrative ability, and information. He watches closely all new-comers till he knows their purposes. The Mormon people believe him to be a true prophet of God; idolize him with a true devotion; would sacrifice all their earthly possessions and follow him pennyless to any quarter of the globe, or would commit any crime at his bidding. My interview with him was pleasant, he talking freely upon all his plans. He has the past season constructed a line of telegraph to every village in Utah, and is ready to build several hundred miles of the Union Pacific railroad. I also found his principal advisers—General Wells, Heber Kimball, and Q. Canon—able and indefatigable men. I found at Salt Lake City about three hundred of our own people, whom they term Gentiles, nearly all traders. They had established a church, a newspaper, and a school; and I was informed at one time they exerted some influence there, but at the time of my visit they were broken up into several factions, probably brought about by the ingenuity of the Mormons, and their influence was scarcely perceptible. I notice since, the Mormon church has prohibited trade with them, and negotiations have been talked of to sell everything out to the Mormons, and leave the country. There

is a garrison of troops there, but at present there is no practical way of making their influence felt. Ben Holliday I believe to be the only outsider acceptable to those people, and to benefit himself I believe would throw the whole weight of his influence in favor of Mormonism. By the terms of his contract to carry the mails from the Missouri to Utah, all papers and pamphlets for the news dealers, not directed to subscribers, are thrown out. It looks very much like a scheme to keep light out of that country, nowhere so much needed.

The Mormons believe that they are the chosen people of God—are His latter-day saints—that their country is Zion; and that they have a great and holy destiny; that our national troubles the past six years are punishments of God for persecutions of *them*; and that He will continue to afflict us till we are destroyed and they rule the land. This is preached to them every Sunday, (I heard it on two occasions,) and is believed by all, and has engendered in them the strongest hatred to our government.

The curses of God are evoked every Sabbath upon the memories of Presidents Polk and Buchanan and Thomas Benton, whom they conceive to have been their special persecutors.

Their temporal prosperity is a marvel. Their wealth commenced with the breaking up and withdrawal of the Johnston army from Camp Floyd by the orders of Secretary Cameron, which also directed the sale or abandonment of the property of the post. This resulted effectually in turning over to the Mormons some five or six millions of property. The discovery of the mines in the neighboring Territories soon after, and the quartering there of a volunteer army, have given such fine markets for their abundant surplus as to have made them in the aggregate very wealthy. They are probably the most universally industrious and law-abiding people on the continent; drunkenness and theft are very uncommon. Crimes against us is to them obedience.

I saw something of the practical workings of polygamy. Brigham Young's establishment and a few others of the wealthy leaders appeared little else than harems; that is, the women did not seem to be utilized for industry. The next class of men generally had four or five wives. Sometimes they possessed as many farms, with a wife to look after each, and sometimes they would all live together, each having her especial branch of domestic duties. The poorer men had one, two or three wives, according to their means, and arrangement seemed to be almost entirely utilitarian.

Originally polygamy seemed to have been introduced to more speedily populate their Territory with their own people, and there is a power in this best understood by studying the progress of the early Moors in Spain, and partially from sensual reasons, there being no preventing power.

Its effects on cultivated society would be to degrade it, especially the women, but with the people of Utah it appears only to retard culture, they being originally found very low in the moral scale. Whenever women there become sufficiently cultivated to appreciate the true dignity of a lady, they at once renounce polygamy. A few renounce it every year, but the leaders know how strongly their power is fortified by abject ignorance, and this gives them no concern. I do not consider polygamy a necessary part of their church creed, and if it becomes necessary to renounce it, they would probably find it convenient to get a revelation to dispense with it.

Were it practical, the policy of putting away the already supernumerary wives might be questioned, as it would take from them, and perhaps from their children, the natural support to which they are entitled. I do not presume to propose any practical means of reaching the institution. You cannot expect a juryman to convict himself, and if Utah is parcelled to the adjoining States and Territories and juries imported, I fear it will hardly meet the want. The hearts of these people must first be taught that it is to their best interests to give it up. This may be a slow process, but in my opinion the best one.

They are hospitable to all strangers, especially to government officials, and, if opportunities occur, are particularly ingenious in shaping their views to their own advantage. I found the internal revenue assessor of the Territory living with their congressional delegate, Mr. Hooper, and, it was believed, to some extent under Mormon influences; he was hardly known to the Gentiles, and not looked upon as on their side. While I was there he received the appointment of colonel in the army, and efforts were at once made to effect a transfer that would give him command of Camp Douglass.

General Connor, who commanded there during the war, I think, treated Mormonism too harshly, due probably to his zeal as a Catholic; yet he exercised a strong influence against Mormonism, and was a true man in the interests of the government, and any clamor or charges made against him for corruption there I believe to have had their origin with Mormon leaders, or their friends, to counteract his influence.

The murder of Doctor Robinson occurred while I was in Salt Lake City, and that of Brassfield some time previous.

There is no doubt of their murder from Mormon church influences, although I do not believe by direct command. Principles are taught in their churches which would lead to such murders. I have earnestly to recommend that a list be made of the Mormon leaders, according to their importance, excepting Brigham Young, and that the President of the United States require the commanding officer of Camp Douglass to arrest and send to the State's prison, at Jefferson City, Missouri, beginning at the head of the list, man for man hereafter killed as these men were, to be held until the real perpetrators of the deed, with evidence for their conviction, be given up. I believe Young, for the present, necessary for us there.

The forts that have been talked of about Brigham Young's place are nothing but high cobble-stone fences, which any one can make about his grounds. The military organizations of the Territory amount to nothing; they do not dream of arming against the United States; they are too shrewd to do so. They are, however, using a more subtle and many times stronger power against us, educating the hearts of rising generations. They will do nothing to give excuse for open force to be brought against them, and I believe their leaders would obey any mandate or arrest on the part of the United States, requiring no other force than to prevent escape by flight. They are loyal to the letter of our laws, but in spirit a separate and distinct nationality. They do not obey the laws of Congress prohibiting polygamy, but they say the Constitution grants them trial by a jury of their peers, whose decision is final, and they are all ready to be tried.

The government should be properly informed as to these people, hoping a remedy may in time present itself. I feel assured that no plan yet proposed will give to us a loyal Utah.

The railroad will help and strengthen them in place of solving the question. It will make it more easy to bring forward converts, and will add ten where it enlightens one. There is a depth of ignorance there that will take many generations of light to reach far into.

If we parcel out their Territory they still have their organization of the State of Deseret, with its legislature, which meets every year to act upon the doings of the lawful Territorial legislature. They are an industrious, agricultural people, and, in fact, do nothing for which war can be waged for their extermination, and they are too valuable a portion of the nation to destroy if they can be utilized; extermination cannot enter the discussion at our age of civilization. The theory that they will go to pieces when Young dies is fallacious; they will certainly provide for such a contingency. The same thing was believed when Joe Smith died, but look at results.

Any hope that their influence may be neutralized by attrition and contact, I

consider groundless; see how entirely they control and destroy all influences of the Gentile community now there. Look at their position geographically; there is between us and them a desert that can never be inhabited by a people of any strength, one thousand miles, and then the Rocky mountains; beyond, another desert six hundred miles in width, and then the Sierras. Such isolation on the maps of other countries is always coincident with separate nationality, and this is their ambition.

No one can be in Utah long without a feeling that they are among a foreign people. It is true they speak our language, but their religion is utterly different from ours, and has become, as respects themselves, a fixed one. They only acknowledge allegiance to us through protest, and then secondary to their own government, and they hate us with an unconcealed bitterness, and constantly pray in their churches for our downfall. With navigation established well up the Colorado, they will be in easy access to the world.

I think it important that the government in some way strengthen its authority there, at the same time increase, by whatever means possible, our friendly relations with those people, and elevate their intelligence, until they come to feel that they are a part of us, and that we are their friends. Harsh measures will only the more strongly consolidate them; it cannot much more deeply embitter them. But of all things, be awake to the real state of things growing up in the centre of our territory.

I was approached while there by parties whom I have reason to believe were friendly to Mormonism upon the subject of sending there a strong force of troops; this was to give them a market, of which they now feel in want. I do not conceive a large force of troops to be required there.

Brigham Young possesses three elements of strength—perfect organization, religious fanaticism, and despotic power; to use all these to the best advantage he has a strong and well-balanced mind.

The delegate in Congress is his exponent and instrument; although elected by votes, it is at his dictation, complying with the letter of the law but not the spirit.

They are now perfectly organized and established, their religion zealously felt, with an abundant resource of manual force, which will be brought forward as fast as it can be used. Their systems abroad for getting converts are very complete, nearly all of Europe being districted, with Mormon marshals on the spot.

Their great success comes simply from taking a class so low that Mormonism, with its material benefits, is to them an advance in the scale of humanity. Such people are not difficult to find in Europe. The working of the machinery of their systems is complete, and their continued success beyond what but few have ever dreamed is insured by simply refraining to provoke the United States to take up arms against them.

The lands of the Territory are still held by government. If it is the intention to give actual title to Mormon occupants on the same grounds as to other emigrants, (and I do not see how we can do less,) a land office should be opened there, and a commissioner appointed to settle conflicting claims.

As a general thing, there will be little trouble, as they have a very correct land system of their own, made to conform to the government system.

The longer this is neglected the more trouble can be expected in reconciling claims.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. B. HAZEN,

*Bvt. Maj. Gen. U. S. Army, Col. 38th U. S. Infantry.*

Hon. J. BIDWELL,

*House of Representatives.*