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Letter from Geo[rge] G. Mackenzie to R[obert] U[nderwood] Johnson, 1891 Sep 27.

George G. Mackenzie

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Raymond, Fresno Co., Cal.

Sept. 27th, '91

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Yours of the 17th rec'd yesterday. Thank you for the proof of that article, which appears to be about the right thing for the occasion. It ought to suggest to Californians a good deal more than is expressly set down.

I hear that a force of wood-choppers are slashing right and left in the neighborhood of "The farm" in Yosemite. Undoubtedly some little thinning of young trees might not be amiss there, but I shudder to think what the result of the present work will be. When I first knew the Valley that part was very attractive. The "improvements" made there during the last three years are a dreadful indication of what the present assault is likely to produce. I also hear that a force is at work in the Big Tree Grove, but I would not venture an opinion on the outcome of their labors without more information than I have at present. I learn

2/ That C. D. Robinson arrived in Yosemite about a week ago. Probably he will inform you of what is doing. The ring have got a firmer clutch on affairs than ever before. They have got Barnard's hotel. Barnard's lease expires with this year, and the house has been leased to one A. B. Glasscock who has been in the stage company's employ, and who recently has run the eating house at Raymond. The scheme was worked by Glasscock's wife, whose relations with A. H. Washburn, and certain of the Yosemite Commission, has been a subject for general and open comment during a long time. How would it do to add a paragraph like the following to the article on "California's Interest in the Yosemite":

"The hotel hitherto leased by Mr. Barnard has been known as the Yosemite Falls House. It has changed hands, and will hereafter be known as the Yosemite Whore House."

3)

Glasscock, by the way, "took up" as a timber claim the land just above Inspiration Point and coterminous with the Yosemite grant at that place. Somebody ought to protest against the issue of a patent. The land was occupied by the Stage Co. when Glasscock filed his claim and proved up - in the Spring of '90. A stable and dwelling had been there for years, and new ones were built last year soon after Glasscock had made "final proof." The land has no value as a timber claim, on account of its position. At most, ~~such~~ value could only be most remotely speculative, while the place has much higher value for other purposes.

Brother Robinson ought to be highly satisfied with the outcome of his pet idea that the way to run the National Park is by a military management. Capt. ^{Wells} has been captured completely by the ring. The Washburns (objects of Robinson's particular detestation) have made a neat bit of money

4/ out of the military. And the National Park, which was hailed with satisfaction by the public not long ago, is now regarded with suspicion, if not actual dislike. I don't wonder at it. I have done something to offset the results of the summer by spreading, as much as I have been able, the excuse that the Park affairs are only in a tentative way, and that after a while they will be put in better condition. I hope that Congress will give the whole subject a thorough overhauling. If I mistake not, Senator Plumb took the lead in interest about the matter in the Senate. How would it do for me, some time before the opening of the session, to write a letter to the Senator, and give him in full all the information at my disposal? If you think any good may accrue, I would get up such a letter. What are the Senator's full name and his home address? There is sure to be a movement to cut down the reservation on the San Joaquin side.

The article suggested by you for future use in the Century would have some bearing on that matter. Before writing any thing I will think over the best method of tackling the subject, and meantime I will write (as you propose) to some of the right kind of men to obtain their views. I would not hesitate about taking a run down to Fresno City, and perhaps to some other places, to have some palaver with folks, but I haven't a dollar to "go on" just now. (I have had abominable luck with my newspaper writing all this year. I find it pays better and is pleasanter work to chop wood for a living, and recently I have been doing good for myself by that sort of exercise.)

But I guess that I can accomplish what is needful by writing to "representative" men.

I suppose that it will be of advantage to prepare the article as quickly as possible, in order that it may be used early in the session of Congress. I will want to crowd

6/ everything possible in the available space, as there is so much misconception about the entire subject of forest preservation that one has to be very careful in order not to make bad worse.

Thanks for your effort to dispose of that other article of mine. I sent, some time ago, another letter on an entirely different matter to Mr. Clement, and it was returned for the same reason - "over-stocked" with general articles.

I will let you know of the results of my letters of inquiry.

Yours very truly

Geo. G. MacKenzie.

The Yosemite stable-men have had their lease renewed for five years. I hear that they are to pay \$600 per annum. Their old lease ran for \$1500 per annum, but two years ago the rental was cut down by half, on the ground that the stable-men were not making money! The swindle over

is outrageous. It will make a pretty showing if we can get a Congressional investigation. The stable business there is one of the biggest little things of which I have ever known, and the concern ought to pay for the keeping of every road and trail around the Valley, besides a good lot more.

I would be greatly obliged if you would send me a copy of the November Century. I may not be able to get a copy here.

As soon as ready, I will send you a copy of the letter that I will address to various persons concerning the proposed extension of reserved forest.

It would be well to look out for any report that Capt. Woods may make to the Secretary of the Interior. The military force will come down about Oct. 22 (I hear) and a report may be made.