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Letter from Geo[rge] G. Mackenzie to [Robert Underwood] Johnson, 1893 Jan 16.

George G. Mackenzie

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Raymond, Fresno Co., Cal.

Jan. 16, '93

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I send you a copy of the report of the Yosemite Comrs: also, with this note, an editorial from The Chronicle, evidently called out by your article in this month's Century. I have read that article with great interest, and hope that it will stir up folks; who have the means, to make an effort to move the Legislature. I'm afraid that I'll not be able to get to Sacramento.

I would have liked much to have seen Special Agent Ekeigel's report in full. I doubt about its being a very effective picture of the condition of the Yosemite. The way he speaks of Clark. (in the extract published in your article) shows that that venerable fraud's white beard and soft manner humbugged the special agent, as they have done for a good many other people.

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You will notice, however, that Mr. Weigel's statement that Clark showed him around does not "jibe well" with Irish's declaration (vide his report) that Weigel only came in contact with persons of "bad eminence" as critics of the precious Commission.

I think that I will send a letter on the subject either to the Times (N.Y.) or the Boston Transcript. If I thought it would do any good I would publish something in a California paper. If I had Weigel's report, I would be better able to see my way.

I have recently sent a letter about the reservations to the Times. Should you see it, I would be pleased if you would send a copy to Mr. Noble. The Times has been so opposed to Noble that I doubt its using even the no more than just reference I make to him, but I hope I will be mistaken. Perhaps, also, if the letter is published, it might do some good to call Cleveland's attention to it.

Yours truly Geo. L. Mackenzie

P.S.

There is one thing unfortunate in your article, or rather in the quotation from Mr. Ward's letter. It is the expression in favor of putting the Valley in charge of an army officer. I am quite convinced that nothing could go further to render unpopular the idea of recession. I have friends who are people of judgment and taste, and who have influence political and otherwise, and who have been strongly on our side, but who ^{are} utterly opposed to the notion of soldierism. I know well what is the general opinion on that score, and I am heartily in accord with it. No soldiers are wanted. They are not necessary. They are not ornamental. They are not useful. There is no shadow of an excuse for a pretense that civil authority cannot do everything that is needed to conduct the affairs of the reservations properly. The very suggestion of military management is

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a stultification of the argument that the Valley should be controlled by some expert in that particular business. Each cobbler to his last, was a piece of advice I once offered to Mr. Hecht, the shoemaker who for a while was a Commissioner. The variation, Let the trooper stick to his troopering, would be applicable. I foresaw the danger of the military getting a foothold at the start, and am half regretful that I didn't sail into the idea right then.

As a matter of fact the Captain in charge of the Park has deliberately and persistently played into the hands of the "ring", besides stirring up a great deal of bad feeling among people who might easily have been conciliated. The men of the command came down this year more than half-disgusted with the whole business. At best they only looked on ~~as~~ it as a pleasure picnic, taking no interest in the purposes of the reservation, and men of that kind will never take such interest. The whole military notion is a lamentable error without a redeeming phase.