

562-584
Richland Dec 28th 1856

Hon. Henry R. Schoolcraft

Dear Sir

Mr. S. M. Rice recently from
Maine called me lately bringing many testimonials of his moral & relig-
ious character who expresses a wish to be useful among the Indians & de-
sires to labor in the capacity of a farmer. I would engage himself to go
to go on the reservation or elsewhere for a reasonable compensation to commence
the following spring & continue as long as his services may be wanted.
He has a wife & 2 children which he wishes to be on the ground with him & with
whom he must board. And should you wish he would board other laborers.
From what I could discover of Mr. Rice, he appears to be a man of enter-
prise & a real friend to the Indians. He expresses it to be his ulti-
mate object to ameliorate their condition. He desires to know soon what
encouragement you could give him that he may make the necessary
preparation.

Your Sunday papers containing instructions &c. have been received
& an early attention to which will be given.

On the first of Nov last I completed the purchase of about 800 acres
of Superior land for the residence of those Indians who are ready to
renounce the use of ardent spirit. This tract of land is situated within the
limits of Barry County & contiguous to the line which ^{separates} it from Talmage
& 3 miles from the village of Richland on Gull Prairie. To make suitable
preparation for the final removal of the Mission, I started with part of my fam-
ily & reached our new home on the 10th ult. We were soon joined by families of the
natives, while others will join us soon & the remainder in the spring. We feel en-
couraged to hope that a brighter day will dawn on the prospects of both Indians

Mr. Mearns

of the same. I have been visited by the natives of different villages & chiefs
have all concluded to unite with us the ensuing summer. I could hardly
believe the population & principally composed of those who love God & therefore
cannot hate the poor Indian. I see here erecting many buildings & improve
the land for a better improvement, to a point which we hope to secure not only
the satisfaction of our Board but also of the U.S. Government.

As the Indians have not received pay for their improvements, they will be un-
der the necessity of expending most of their funds for building & the purchase of
necessaries to subsist while making improvements, consequently I am compelled
to advance the most of my funds to purchase a home for them. Now until the In-
dians can refund the money I advanced for them. I should be happy to receive
a share of the annuity appropriated for missions & also a small sum for
agricultural purposes for them.

Our removal from the plains & situated where we are, does not make us any more
unlike from some of the tribes of the natives nor will our change cause our labors
to be more confined than they were before. I intend in future to redouble our
labors among them as a whole & hope by the blessing of God to be more use-
ful than hitherto we have been by preaching the Gospel & instructing in letters &
agricultural pursuits.

"As a whole they have not what to do with ^{the} money they appear utterly averse to
emigrating West to the Mississippi & disinclined to go on to their reserva-
tion. I cherish the idea that many will conform to our regulations & are long-
ing with us to give them an opportunity to obtain a comfortable
livelihood I shall no pains or ^{pleasure} ~~trouble~~ from any sacrifice.

With much respect

I remain Your

Obedient servant

L. Slater

May 5th

P.S. Previous to our leaving the Rapids the Indians leased their houses & fields
to us with their saw mill to different individuals that no wages may be
retained until the appraisal should be made by Govt. Last evening I re-
ceived information that five captives were determined to take possession
of the houses & fields & also the mill on account of our leaving & declared that
they will not desist from their purpose without the Agent of Indian Affairs.
I mention the Aukimay of the Indians to hold their prisoners until appraised
& paid. Should you have the goodness to say what shall be done in relation
to this matter?

L. J.