G. S. L. City, U. T.

Feb. 4th. 1858.

Hon. J. M. Bernhisel,

Dear Brother: ‑

Brothers Orson Pratt, Ezra T. Benson and Company arrived safely on the 18th. of last month, bringing your letter of the 2nd of November. Yours of the 13th of that month also came to hand on the 3rd inst. per the California Mail, which as yet makes its regular trips. The Eastern Mail if it has been sent since the annulling of Mr. Hiram Kimball's Contract has been retained by the Army now encamped at the Bridger ruins; not a letter or paper, neither a Mail Carrier has been permitted to come this side of that point. We have, however, received a few papers containing the President's Message, and the current news of the day. We consider the Message decidedly hostile, however lamentable it may appear for the President of a great nation to be influenced by falsehood and prejudice, and upon that basis exercise the power of the Government to crush <out not only the liberty but the very existence of> an innocent people, yet it is so. Mr. Buchanan has never taken the proper steps to inform himself in regard to our affairs: he probably does not wish to know whether we are or are not guilty, but quietly falling into the common prejudice of the people, thinking that to be the most popular course, and hence the easiest, saving the trouble of investigation and any fear of being convinced of his mistakes. He may awake some day to find the eggregious error into which he has fallen. He calls resistance to such foul and unhallowed oppression rebellion: with us it is self defence. He may feel safe reposing under the shelter of popular clamor based upon falsehood, base calumny, and misrepresentation, but will eventually find himself stripped of his refuge of lies, exposed in all his naked deformity. The Commissioner Mr, Denver also took the privilege of publishing in the papers my report for the first quarter of the present fiscal year, and also his reply, which, if it has been sent, I suppose is retained with our other Mail matter by the Army; at least, no such letter has ever reached me. He tries hard to invalidate my statement that the Government have always approved of my course and policy with the Indians, confounding that with my complaints to the Department for the dilatory and shameful manner in which I have been treated in regard to <my> accounts. A discerning public, I think, can easily discern the very unfair dodge which he was compelled to make upon that point; but we have the documents on hand to prove its correctness, and shall in due time, probably when the letter itself arrives, show him up.

I wrote in my last for you to present our Constitution and Application for admission into the Union as a State; not that we expect to be admitted under present cloudy auspices, but let them have it if it be only to reject us; and yet they may, peradventure, consider to admit us the easiest way of getting rid of the "vexed question". If they should reject you from your Seat get some Member to present the documents in the House of Representatives, and also in the Senate and preserve a copy to yourself.

In regard to letters of Genl. Burr's being opened, and put up again by the Post‑master in that blundering manner it proves itself a lie. We presume if such circumstances occurred at all it was by himself, or his blundering clerks. I know nothing of it, and care less; hence treat this like thousands of other attempts to fasten upon this people guilt and crime, we pass it by unnoticed. We could not afford to keep a standing army of clerks to refute such idle tales.

In regard to offensive correspondence from this Territory being intercepted at the G. S. L. City post office, one thing is certain, it did go and the papers did print it. It would seem as though if the Government were possessed of one particle of good sense that this would be sufficient reputation to all such base calumny as that of Mrs. Genl. Burr.

In regard to the Superintendent over drawing the appropriations made for the Indians services from Mr. Denver's own showing there has been some 8 or 10,000 dollars more appropriated if we include the $45.000 than drawn for; but suppose the exigency of the service required, as Agent Hurt thought it did, an advance in order to open Indian farms and teach the Indians to labor furnishing them with teams, tools, seed, &c. Is it so very unusual for expenses of this nature when they exceed the amount appropriated to find their way into a deficiency bill? Who is the most to blame for such things, if there is any blame to be attached me for permitting such drafts to be made, on the department for paying them without authority? I stated in one of my reports to the department that I could not control this matter without they would intrust me with the appropriations which they have never done. These expenses would be incurred by the Agents before the reports were made, and if the Department chose to pay them, of course I had no objection. As to their being actually proper and necessary I never had a doubt, and a much larger amount would have been perfectly justifiable. The Government has always dealt most parsimoniously with this Territory in regard to Indian affairs, as I am abundantly able to maintain.

Moreover, Agent Hurt has not made his reports through this office now over a year; what little I dictated for him to do, he acted as he pleased about it and generally did as he wished perfectly independent of the Superintendent, doubtless depending upon the Department to sustain him in whatever he might do; and as the Department seem inclined to listen to his lies, they will have to settle those matters with each other. Not since he became satisfied that his and other officials' lies to the government were making an impression which was calculated to bring them down upon us with an armed force for which they had so long been figuring, planning and intriguing to the neglect of their duties, has he held any correspondence with me.

How could I know anything about his business under such circumstances? If I had called him to account he would like the others considered himself imposed upon and run with them just escaping, as they say, with their lives: but he finally did make his exit in that way which he doubtless expected would create the greatest excitement in the States. He left clandestinely with a few Indians. just as though he could not have gone out freely and safely at any time whenever he should have chosen to have done so: but, no, this would not answer his purpose so he engages some Indians to go with him and makes what he doubtless calls a narrow escape for no other reason than to raise still greater excitement against us.

I have thus posted you up on a few matters which you may have to meet, that I consider a refutation of any particular use, but for your satisfaction that you may know how they are. The fact is, those corrupt officials have raised this storm against us by their infernal falsehoods, and the President and his Cabinet have lent a willing ear. Our papers and documents have been regularly forwarded to you, and also the different Departments of Government. We hardly expect fair play, but let them persist in their unhallowed course and they will find that they have stirred a nest of bees which will make it hum about their ears before they will succeed "in wiping us all out"‑‑ before they succeed very far in "applying the dissecting knife".

All is quiet, union and peace with us. It seems difficult to believe the elements of war are so near us, and so soon to be let loose upon our devoted heads; but in God we put our trust, and come what may shall be prepared as well as may be to defend ourselves.

To the Postmasters on the route, who open and read this letter, when get through with it will you please to have the kindness again to enclose it and forward it to its destination.

And now, dear Doctor, I must close. Remember that you have our constant faith and prayers for your success and safety.

May the Lord bless and prosper you forever is the prayer of

your Brother in the Gospel of Christ

Brigham Young