

Instructions to California Indian Agents, from the Office of Indian Affairs

“The object of the government is to obtain all the information it can with reference to tribes of Indians within the boundaries of California, their manner, habits, customs, and extent of civilization, and to make such treaties and compact with them as may seem just and proper...The board will convene...and will determine upon some rule of action which will be most efficient in attaining the desired object, which is, by all possible means, to conciliate the good feelings of the Indians, and to get them to ratify those feelings by entering into written treaties, binding on them, towards the government and each other.” (A.S. Loughery, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to McKee, Barbour, and Wozencraft, October 15, 1850. *Senate Exec. Doc. 4, Serial 688*, p. 52.)

Questions:

1. What do you think Mr. Loughery meant when he said he wanted the Agents to “conciliate the good feelings of the Indians?”
2. What guidelines did he give the agents who would be making these treaties?
3. Do these instructions seem realistic to you? Why or why not?