

FOUR REPORTS BY NEVE, 1777-1779¹

Translated by LINDLEY BYNUM

BUILDINGS

No. 82 //78

Most Excellent Señor:

S EÑOR.

I account to you that on my arrival at these new establishments, I found the mission of San Diego already rebuilt and the foundation of San Juan Capistrano concluded in the same place in which it was started, in both having guarded the implements of the censor; covering them with earth. Also I found built the fort of San Francisco and adjacent the mission of the same name, the former immediately at the entrance of the port, and the second at a distance from the fort of five quarters of a league next to the lagoon of Our Lady of the Sorrows, one and another sites were occupied the 27 of June, and convenient to the mission there is plenty of water, firewood and stone for building with lands proportionable for cornfields, and with the advantage of a spring situated near at hand with water not difficult to draw out, which acquired, can succeed in benefiting with irrigation a large sown field.

The second mission which was called Our Lady of Santa Clara was located the 4th day of last January, at 15 leagues distance to the southwestward from the fort on the bank of the River of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It has according to my information, much land for sowing on both sides of the River irrigated and moist, and very easy to bring the water, although the mission and the tilled lands are exposed (according to the apprehensions of the R. R. P. P.) to the inundations which may be occasioned of which they have no experience following the year with the greatest scarcity of water which may be experienced, the gentiles who inhabit this land are very numerous; as soon as I am free, and as soon as the scouting parties of this presidio return, I leave to examine those missions and fort, of which I will inform you with more particularity: moreover I have instructed the Lieutenant Don Joseph Joaquin de Moraga to arrange what is convenient to wall in the fort, to conform to the provisions of the royal reglamento of presidios; which already is partially started and will continue until finished, in this one, because like the other it is composed of barracks or huts without protection except the small house of the Commander and the store house which are of adobe otherwise they should have already collapsed had they not been propped up during the past year as previously happened before to the

¹ Provincias Internas Tom. 121. Archivo General de Mexico. Translated from transcripts loaned by Henry R. Wagner.

chapel, for which a small hut serves during the day, and to expedite the whole work it is necessary to employ the troop with the few servants of the presidio, which fact I make known to you hoping your benevolence may grant to these companies the remuneration which is of your superior pleasure.

Our Lord protect your excellent person many years. Monterey,
February 25, 1777.

Excellent Señor
Phelipe de Neve (Rubric).

*Most Excellent Señor Bailio Don Antonio
Bucareli y Ursua.*

TROOPS

IN WHICH account is given to His Excellency of the state in which are found the Companies of the three presidios of California Septentrional as to Animals, Riding Equipment, Armaments and Mounted Troops, with statement of the number of mules and Horses which are deemed requisite, and a Relation of the supplies of Clothing, Accoutrements and Arms which are needed.

No. 83.¹

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MOST Excellent Señor.

Señor: The third of the present month I arrived at this Presidio, not having been able to accomplish this with greater promptitude because of the great distance, and the preservation of the horses which transported me.

At my passing by the Presidio of San Diego I examined the condition of the troops of the garrison, as they exercised at my passage, of the horses and soldiers employed as the guard of the mission, as well as the company of this Presidio, with one thing and another were found in a most deplorable state, the clothes, as well as the armament and horses; first because they were seen not to conform to uniformity, indiscriminately short over-jackets [and] waistcoats of calico of varied colors were used, rarely are those who have a hat and sleeves remaining and [the clothes of] many have so greatly deteriorated that they are almost indecent.

The armament besides being of unequal caliber from that prescribed is too disordered for safety. The swords (with the exception of those which in the last year were sent to San Diego) are

¹ Provincias Internas Tom. 121 Archivo General.

completely useless, because of their poor quality, short or dull, there being various men who have none likewise the lances, almost all the soldiers being found stripped of the necessities for their mounts which in addition are very old, few of which do not lack some of the parts of this equipment.

The cavalry which the troop of these presidios has consists of 70 mules and 37 horses, that of San Diego distributed in 43 stalls of their own garrison (excluding the 25 recruits of reserve who are mounted) 86 mules and 41 horses, that of Monterey. Divided into 45 stalls of those composing the garrison, including 20 who protect the escorts of the three missions of San Luis, San Antonio, and Carmel. 31 mules and 57 horses, that of San Francisco divided into 34 stalls of those who make up their company exclusive of the Lieutenant in which number of horsemen might be considered a fifth part that are useless.

In this relation I would call to your attention the accompanying two reports, one concerning the clothing and articles of equipment which are necessary for the companies of each Presidio according to the state in which they now are, and the other of the armament, powder, and balls corresponding to each one in this manner for their respective armament as for that which should exist for future needs, so that being worthy of the approval of yourself you may order to remit on the first occasion the articles of clothing, equipment, armament and munitions which will be sent to each one of the referred Presidios.

Likewise I ought to state to you that notwithstanding how many arms these companies actually possess, (excepting the twenty soldiers of that of San Francisco) they are the property of the troop having been charged their value, it is convenient that they be gathered together and deposited in the warehouses in order by this method to avoid the great inconvenience at which they are sold to the pagans, who anxiously ask especially for sword blades, fragments of these, points of sharp lances and every kind of cutting instrument. Cutters with which I saw many natives in the Santa Barbara channel armed, being worthy of notice the nicety with which they burnish, polish, and make a sharp thrust of a piece of sword. And if this should be to your satisfaction the new equipment could be distributed without charging it to the soldier who alone would remain responsible for its repair and who is required to return it when he is either on leave or dead.

Regarding the horses which at this time the three companies have, (excluding officers) 147, and the riding animals and mules that exist, 322 altogether, the approximately eighty mules and 26 horses which should come from Loreto makes 438 which is equal to three horses for a stall, lacking three animals, without counting those which

of this number are understood to be depreciated on account of age and incapacity with which it is not possible that service can be done without considerable delay as one who experiences to suffer fatigue, those soldiers who find themselves in better state for their journeys with borrowing from one another, leave those who remain in the Presidio almost unmounted; with which consideration and that of the herds of this presidio and that of San Diego, they find themselves so deteriorated that in order to help them, with 52 loads of corn from the frontier of Velicatá, and mission of San Luis it has been forced upon me to avail myself of 12 mules from the mission of San Diego and 23 from the herd of the Presidio of San Francisco, not having been able to take in such emergency more than 17 animals from the two remaining; on account of which in order to put the troops of these presidios in a state of service, counting on the shipment of these beasts being late and a diminution of those on hand which might occur I rule there are needed 200 mules and 300 horses, whose transport only could be accomplished by land following the route of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, without the loss of horses and the increased delay of years which their shipping would cause, and the prolonged march coming from Loreto. All of this I represent to you in fulfilment of my obligation.

Our Father guard your excellent person happy years. Monterey
26 of February 1777.

Most Excellent Señor,

Phelipe de Neve (Rubric)

Most Excellent Generous Señor Don Antonio Bucareli y Ursua.

REGLAMENTO

IN WHICH Account is given of the urgency there will be of naming an Aide who will exercise in the five presidios of Californias the same functions as those of the Inspector in the presidios of the frontier, in the event that the provisions proposed for the new Reglamento are approved.

No. 71

MY GOOD Señor, I proceed to inform you that thus in order to carry out the establishment of the presidio and the missions which are to be situated on the channel of Santa Barbara and the pueblo which is to be founded bordering the river of Porsincula [sic] as you have decided, as likewise now to establish the new rule and reglamento which I have proposed, for the presidios of this peninsula, standardizing in all its adaptable parts its government to that specified in the Royal Reglamento of presidios,

being indispensable (for this plan to be approved) or that the governor be named inspector for these, or that these functions be exercised by the governor, given the great extension of the province in which are his presidios, it is impossible that anyone would be able to accomplish this without the aid of an assistant, and least [of all] I who have to formulate and establish these new plans, called from these attentions, when my weakened head causes me to suffer these partial application and material work with which I was able to carry out those matters which were intrusted to me at another time, and finding myself at present in a place where I have no one whom I could intrust with the copying of a letter.

In attention to this matter I have addressed you entreating that should the proposed rules be approved for the change of Reglamento in this peninsula, that you deign to name an assistant who will exercise in these presidios the functions which are those of inspector in [the presidios] on the frontier, this post should be conferred on a Lieutenant of acknowledged intelligence and good conduct with the salary which your grace may be pleased to grant him.

Our Father guard you many years. Monterrey and April 3, 1779.

I kiss the hand of your excellency.

Your attentive and trusted servant,

Phelipe de Neve (Rubric)

Señor Comandante General Cavallero de Croix.

TROOPS AND FOOTING

ACCOUNT is given of the Arms, Powder, balls and Loads of cannon which are needed to complete the equipment and stores of the Companies; and two Memoranda of the Clothes, Foodstuffs and effects ruled necessary to Supply the troops which are to Guard the Channel, the Pobladores and their families, and in the next year expected to arrive to this Province, and that it will be opportune to conduct by sea a Reconnaissance of the Channel for the purpose of marking the safest shelter for the landings.

Provincias Internas Tom. 121. Archivo General.

No. 92 //48

MY DEAR SIR, I convey to your hands the enclosed report, which states the arms, powder, and balls necessary to complete the companies of these three Presidios and their stores; the powder and balls and loads of cannon are necessary, as likewise, the stores belonging to the troop which is to garrison the channel of

Santa Barbara, two cannons of 4 for this presidio and cartouches which for the present supply it.

Likewise considering the necessities of the troop, the settlers and their families on their arrival, that they may be helped with clothing, which has been destroyed during the long voyage, in order that they may not experience the need of the various effects and food necessary, I have judged it necessary to direct to you the accompanying two memorials, in order that having it handy your excellency may condescend to take steps to remit the supplies which they contain, from Mexico and San Blas in the next year with the vessel which conveys the pay of the presidio of San Diego, to deliver it to Lieutenant Don Joseph Francisco de Ortega in case that at their arrival here, the channel is not occupied since they all ought to be transported there, with the two cannons which you will be able to supply from the Department of San Blas.

In case this is carried out in this way the commander of the boat will find in the said San Diego, all the instructions that I may rule and can be useful in carrying out this commission and it will be very opportune for me to bring the order to inspect the coast of the channel, to mark the shelter or bay which in relation to the presidio, will allow the vessels to cast anchor and unload food and effects which they may in the future contain.

Our Lord protect your Excellency many years. Monterey, July 19, 1779.

I kiss the hand of your Excellency your most
Attentive and faithful servant,

Phelipe de Neve (Rubric).

Señor Comandante General Cavallero de Croix.