

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A letter from the Secretary of the Interior, inclosing a copy of a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, setting forth the necessity of a deficiency appropriation of \$78,110 for the purchase of supplies for the Crow Indians.

DECEMBER 19, 1883.—Read and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I transmit herewith a letter from the Secretary of the Interior, inclosing a copy of a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, setting forth the necessity of a deficiency appropriation of \$78,110 for the purchase of supplies for the balance of the present fiscal year for the Crow Indians.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
December 19, 1883.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 15, 1883.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a copy of a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, setting forth the necessity of a deficiency appropriation of \$78,110 for the purchase of supplies for the balance of the present fiscal year for the Crow Indians, and beg to recommend that the same be forwarded to Congress for its favorable consideration.

Very respectfully,

H. M. TELLER,
Secretary.

The PRESIDENT.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, December 15, 1883.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith deficiency estimate, in triplicate, for the sum of \$78,110, required for the purchase of bacon, beef, and flour for the support of the Crow Indians in Montana for the balance of the fiscal year 1884.

SUPPLIES FOR THE CROW INDIANS.

In explanation of this estimate I inclose herewith copy of a report of Inspector Howard, dated December 6, 1883; also copy of a letter of Agent Armstrong, at the Crow Agency. There are now at this agency 3,226 Indians, who require subsistence to keep them from starving. During the fiscal years 1877 and 1878 the amount appropriated by Congress for the purchase of food for the Crows was \$100,000 per annum; for the fiscal year 1879 \$75,000 were furnished; for 1880, 1881, and 1882 \$65,000 per annum were appropriated; for 1883 \$50,000, and for the present fiscal year \$48,000 were furnished, \$10,000 of which were to be used for the removal of the Crows to the Little Big Horn, leaving only \$38,000 for the purchase of food.

It will thus be seen, that while the buffalo, which to a large extent furnished food to the Crows in former years, has almost disappeared, the appropriation for their support has been decreased during the last eight years, from \$100,000 in 1877 to \$38,000 for the current year, although the price of beef and other supplies has increased.

There is now on the books of this office, to the credit of the Crows, the sum of \$35,000, including the \$25,000 paid by the Northern Pacific Railroad for right of way through the Crow Reservation, and which amount the Indians expect to be paid to them in cash.

The total amount (\$35,000) will be required to erect agency buildings, school-house, hospital, &c., at the new agency, and unless the amount estimated for by this office is furnished, these Indians will starve or commit depredations on the settlers in Montana.

I have therefore the honor to request that the inclosed estimate be forwarded to the President, to be sent by him to Congress with a request for an early appropriation.

Very respectfully,

H. PRICE,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Special estimates of appropriations required for the service of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1884, by the Indian Office.

Detailed objects of expenditure, and explanations.	Total amount to be appropriated under each head of appropriation.	Amount appropriated for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 1884.
SUPPORT OF CROWS.		
This amount for the purchase of bacon, beef, and flour, for the Crow Indians in Montana, being a deficiency for the fiscal year, 1884. Appropriated, 22 Stat., p. 437	\$78, 110 00	\$105, 000 00

INSPECTOR'S OFFICE, CROW AGENCY, MONTANA,
December 6, 1883.

SIR: The urgent want of food for the Crow Indians for the winter is so great, I forward at once this special report.

By the inclosed table, which I have had made (Exhibit A), you will see that the beef at the present rate of issue (not a full ration) will be all gone by December 29, instant. The bacon will be gone at the same date. The flour will last to February 16th proximo.

The honorable Commissioner has suggested that the stock cattle (heifers and cows) brought here the past fall may be killed if needed for food. This would be most deplorable. These cows are just what these Indians have long desired and just what they need to start them towards self-support. If the entire herd of stock-cattle should be slaughtered it would only afford relief for ten weeks additional. It seems Congress must be asked to take action at any rate. Why not provide all that are wanted of beeves and spare the cows? It is not easy to get a herd wanted to the range and acclimatized. These Indians are to be moved to their new location and begin farming in good earnest in the spring. Other cows could not be brought here in season for that. These would be here and ready for issue at that time.

I find that in Wyoming, not very far from this agency, 500 or more beeves can be bought. The agent has learned of at least two parties who can supply them this winter. These parties do not have their herds in large associations and running on an extensive range with cattle belonging to other owners; hence there would not be

the difficulty or to round up that there would be in most parts of Montana. It is therefore possible to supply these Indians with beef by December 29, and not sacrifice the stock herd, if the Department can act promptly and by telegraph. I do not hesitate to urge that this be done.

Never before have the buffalo been entirely wanting for these Indians; and just now when that resource is gone the supply of beef is reduced rather than increased. There will be suffering and serious trouble if this crisis is not promptly and adequately met.

There is no question as to the accuracy of the census which has been taken the past year with great care. The number of these Indians is 3,226.

I trust that what I have written, with the table, will afford the honorable Secretary with all needed data.

Very respectfully,

C. H. HOWARD,
United States Indian Inspector.

Hon. H. M. TELLER,
Secretary of the Interior.

CROW AGENCY, June 18, 1883.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular dated June 5, relating to supplies purchased for the subsistence of the Crows during the fiscal year 1884.

I consider it my duty to say in reply that the quantities purchased will not subsist my Indians more than one-fourth of the year. These people must live in some way; there is no more game on their own country, and very little on the surrounding territory, and they ought not to be permitted to go outside of their reservation again after game. For several years they have been subsisting themselves during nearly three-fourths of each year by hunting, principally outside the limits of their own country, but they can subsist themselves in that way no longer. They will have to remain at their agency all winter, and will either starve to death or go over the line into Wyoming, where there are thousands of cattle, and help themselves from the herds belonging to their white neighbors. Of course they will not starve to death; they will do the other thing unless the Government supports them.

Instead of the half million pounds of beef purchased we shall need \$1,500,000 pounds; instead of the 160,000 pounds flour we shall need not less than 400,000 pounds; and we shall have to have that much in some way or other to enable us to get through the year. We have here a nation of Indians that has never done the whites any wrong worth speaking of, not even so much as the whites do to each other. Their only sin is that they have not learned the white man's life, and for this they are not entirely to be blamed. They have had no opportunity to locate on their own separate homes, and the surrounding country has filled up with such surprising rapidity that their means of support is taken away from them.

To undertake to starve these people now before any effort has been made to locate them will be very likely to create some disturbance and endanger the cattle in the surrounding territory very much.

Very respectfully,

H. J. ARMSTRONG,
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. H. PRICE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.