

JOSEPH BISSONNETTE.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

*The claim of Joseph Bissonnette for depredations committed by Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians.*

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JANUARY 26, 1871.—Referred to the Committee of Claims and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, D. C., January 26, 1871.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith for the consideration and action of Congress, under the 4th section of the act of July 15, 1870, making appropriations for the Indian Department, the claim of Joseph Bissonnette, for the value of property taken from him in 1864 and 1865, by Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapaho Indians.

A communication dated the 21st instant, in relation to this claim, is also herewith inclosed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO,  
*Secretary.*

Hon. JAMES G. BLAINE,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, D. C., January 21, 1871.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a claim of Joseph Bissonnette, for the value of property taken from him in 1864 and 1865, by Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians, amounting to \$7,880.

The claimant sets forth in his application and affidavit, that a party of Sioux came to his ranch on Deer Creek in October, 1864, and stole thirty-nine horses and four oxen, of the average value of one hundred dollars each; and that in April, 1865, they stole four horses, three of them worth one hundred dollars each, and one worth four hundred dollars; that at Laprelle, in January, 1865, a band of Cheyennes stole four horses, valued at one hundred dollars each; three cows, sixty dollars each, and

an ox worth one hundred dollars; and again, at Bitter Cottonwood, in March, 1865, they stole nine horses, valued at one hundred dollars each; and claimant further charges that the Arapahoes, in November, 1864, stole, at Deer Creek, thirteen horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each; and that his several losses are, by the Sioux, \$5,000, the Cheyennes, \$1,580, and the Arapahoes, \$1,300; total, \$7,880.

Two of the persons whose evidence is adduced, John Boyle and Hubert Roleau, testify to the same facts as stated in the application of claimant, except that they say nothing about the four oxen taken in October, 1864, by the Sioux. The other affiant in the case, Rafael Gallegos, testifies to the same also, save as to the nine horses stolen in November, 1865, by the Arapahoes, and the four horses taken by the Sioux in April of that year, of which no mention is made by him.

Accompanying the claim is a paper signed by "Spotted Tail" and others, chiefs and headmen of the Brulé and Ogallalla bands of Sioux, in which they acknowledge that their people at various times, when reduced to want, raided upon the Platte, and took many cattle and horses from Mr. Bissonnette, the number agreeing with that stated by the claimant. There is also a similarly executed paper from "Cut Nose," and others, chiefs and headmen of the Cheyenne Indians, in which they admit their people took on different occasions from Mr. Bissonnette fifteen horses, four oxen, and two cows. In the letter of the United States Indian agent, Vital Jarrot, forwarding the claim, it is remarked by the agent that these papers were signed by the chiefs in open council, after he had made the demand for satisfaction asked for by the claimant. There is nothing in the papers showing that any demand was ever made upon the Arapahoes for satisfaction for the depredations committed by them.

This office is of the opinion that the claim is proved as to the fact of the depredations having been committed by the Indians of the tribes named; but it is thought that the value given to the property is too high. Disallowing the charge for the four oxen, the loss of which has not sufficient evidence to support it, the claim, it is suggested, might be favorably considered for the loss of 42 horses at \$75 each, and one at \$200, stolen by the Sioux, \$3,350; for 13 horses, at \$75 each, 3 cows, \$40 each, and an ox, \$60, taken by the Cheyennes, \$1,155; and for 13 horses, at \$75 each, taken by the Arapahoes, \$975; making a total of \$5,480.

I respectfully recommend that the claim be submitted to Congress, for action by that body, under the provision relating to claims for depredations by Indians, contained in the 4th section of the act of 15th July last, making appropriations for the Indian Department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. R. CLUM,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

Hon. C. DELANO,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

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FORT LARAMIE, DAKOTA,  
July 21, 1866.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose and forward to you the petition of Joseph Bissonnette, praying for indemnity for large depredations of the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes. I also forward his deposition and that of divers other persons, containing all the evidence in support of said petition. I also forward herewith the acknowledgment of the

Sioux and Cheyenne chiefs, which they gave and signed in open council, after I had made the demand for satisfaction asked by the petitioner. All of which is most respectfully submitted.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

VITAL JARROT,  
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. D. N. COOLEY.

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, for depredations of said Indians.*

*To Vital Jarrot, United States Indian agent of the Upper Platte agency, in Dakota Territory :*

Your petitioner, Joseph Bissonnette, respectfully represents that for many years he has been living on the North Platte, west of Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, and that he has never, during that time, given the Indians any provocation, but has always demeaned himself properly and kindly toward them. Your petitioner complains that the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes have at different times stolen the horses and cattle belonging to him; that the Sioux, in the month of October, 1864, stole and carried away thirty-nine of his horses and mares, of the value of thirty-nine hundred dollars, also four oxen, worth four hundred dollars; that afterward, having removed for greater security to Little Deer Creek, the Sioux again, in the month of April, 1865, stole from him three horses, worth one hundred dollars, and another horse of the value of four hundred dollars. Your petitioner complains further, that the Cheyennes, on the 15th day of January, A. D. 1865, at Laprelle, in the same Territory, took, stole, and carried away four head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each, three cows, each of the value of sixty dollars, and one ox, of the value of one hundred dollars; that afterward a party of the same Cheyennes came and stole at Bitter Cottonwood, same Territory, nine head of horses, each of the value of one hundred dollars, the property of your petitioner. Your petitioner further complains, that the Arapahoes also stole thirteen head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each, the property of your petitioner, from his residence in said Territory, on Deer Creek. Your petitioner, having never recovered said property nor been compensated for its loss, therefore asks that this his just claim against the Sioux, of five thousand dollars; against the Cheyennes, of fifteen hundred and eighty dollars; and against the Arapahoes, of thirteen hundred dollars, be by you presented to the chiefs, respectively, of said Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, and demand of reparation be made to them; and that afterward you forward this petition, the answer of the chiefs, with all the depositions I propose to take before you in support of this petition, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and that you accompany the same with such statements as you may deem it your duty to make in the premises.

JOSEPH BISSONNETTE.

FORT LARAMIE, D. T., June 23, 1866.

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapaho Indians of the Platte, and the Government of the United States, for losses by him sustained from depredations of said Indians.*

TERRITORY OF DAKOTA, *Fort Laramie, ss :*

Joseph Bissonnette, being first duly sworn on oath, deposeth and saith, that whilst he was peaceably engaged on his ranch at Deer Creek, in the month of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, said ranch being situated on the North Platte, on the California road, in the Territory of Dakota, a party of Sioux Indians came to his ranch and stole and carried away thirty-six brood mares and three work-horses, of an average value of one hundred dollars each; also four oxen, of the value also of one hundred dollars each; that afterward, when camped with other citizens on Little Deer Creek, near Fort Laramie, in the month of April, A. D. 1865, said Sioux Indians came and stole and carried away from him four saddle-horses, three of them being of the value of one hundred dollars each, and the other an extraordinary fine horse, of the value of four hundred dollars. This affiant further saith, that at Laprelle, also on the North Platte, and also in Dakota Territory, on the 15th day of January, A. D. 1865, a band of Cheyennes made a dash on his herd, drove and carried away three brood mares and one gelding, each of the value of one hundred dollars, three cows, each of the value of sixty dollars, and one ox, of the value of one hundred dollars; that afterward, to wit, on the 10th day of March, 1865, a party of the same Indians, to wit, Cheyennes, came and stole from his herd, then at Bitter Cottonwood, also on the North Platte, in Dakota Territory, nine head of horses, of the

value of one hundred dollars each. This affiant further saith, that on the 15th day of November, A. D. 1864, a party of Arapahoes came, stole and drove away from his herd at Deer Creek, as afore-described, thirteen head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each, thus making the loss of this affiant, from the depredations of the Sioux, five thousand dollars; of the Cheyennes, fifteen hundred and eighty dollars, of the Arapahoes, thirteen hundred dollars. This affiant further avers that he has never received any indemnity from any source for said losses, and that he has never sought private satisfaction by revengeful acts, or in any manner forbidden by law; but he has relied for indemnity on the Government, and in the guarantee given in the laws for such cases made and provided. With this application this affiant offers the acknowledgment of the chiefs of the respective tribes; also the corroborating testimony of disinterested persons, establishing the value of property taken, and further saith not.

JOSEPH BISSONNETTE.

Signed in my presence and acknowledged before me, at Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, June 27, A. D. 1866.

VITAL JARROT,  
United States Indian Agent.

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, and the United States Government, for losses by depredations of said Indians, Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory.*

Hubert Rouleau, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that during the years 1864 and 1865 he was living with Joseph Bissonnette, and that he was well acquainted with all the stock of horses and cattle then owned by said Bissonnette. That in the month of October, A. D. 1864, said Bissonnette was residing at Deer Creek, on the North Platte, in Dakota Territory, when a party of Sioux came, stole and drove away thirty-nine head of horses, of the value of \$100 each, the property of said Bissonnette; that afterward said Bissonnette was removed, and lived on Little Deer Creek, near Fort Laramie, in the month of April, 1865; said Soux then and there came, stole and drove away four horses, three of the value of \$100 each, and the other an extraordinary fine horse of the value of \$400. Affiant further says that at Laprelle, in said Territory, on the 15th day of January, A. D. 1865, a band of Cheyennes made a dash on his herd, drove and carried away three brood mares and one gelding, each of the value of \$100; three cows, each of the value of \$60, and one ox, of the value of \$100; that afterward, on the 10th day of March, 1865, a party of the same Cheyennes came and stole, at Bitter Cottonwood, also in said Territory, nine head of horses, of the value of \$100 each, the property of said Bissonnette; also, that on the 15th day of November, 1864, a party of Arapahoes stole and drove away, at said Deer Creek, thirteen head of horses, of the value of \$100 each, the property of the said Bissonnette, and further says not.

HUB. ROULEAU,  
Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 27th day of June, 1866.

VITAL JARROT,  
United States Indian Agent.

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, and the United States, for losses by him sustained from depredations of said Indians.*

FORT LARAMIE, Dakota Territory, ss :

Rafael Gallegos, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that in the month of October, A. D. 1864, that he was then living on Deer Creek, on the North Platte, in Dakota Territory, when the Sioux Indians then and there came and stole thirty-nine head of horses, the property of Joseph Bissonnette; that three of said horses were work horses and the other thirty-six were brood mares and young horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each. That afterward, at Laprelle, about twenty miles from said Deer Creek, on the 15th day of January, A. D. 1865, a party of Cheyennes stole and drove away three brood mares and one gelding, each of the value of one hundred dollars, the property of said Bissonnette; three cows, each of the value of sixty dollars; and one ox, of the value of one hundred dollars; also, that on the 10th day of March, 1865, a party of Cheyennes stole from the herd of said Bissonnette, then at Bitter Cottonwood, in said Territory, nine head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each. That said Indians appropriated said stock to their own use, and further says not.

RAFAEL GALLEGOS.

Sworn and subscribed before me at Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, June 27, 1866.

VITAL JARROT,  
United States Indian Agent.

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians, and the Government of the United States, for losses from depredations of said Indians.*

FORT LARAMIE, *Dakota Territory* :

John Boyé, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that since the year 1863 he has been living with Joseph Bissonnette, a great part of the time in his employ; that at Deer Creek, about the middle of October, A. D. 1864, a party of Sioux stole and carried away thirty-nine horses and mares, each of the value of one hundred dollars, the property of said Bissonnette; that afterward, when he and said Bissonnette had removed to Little Deer Creek, near Fort Laramie, in the month of April, A. D. 1865, said Sioux Indians came, stole, and carried away four horses, the property of said Bissonnette; that three of said horses were worth one hundred dollars each, and one, a very fine horse, was worth four hundred dollars. This deponent further says that on the 15th day of January, 1865, a band of Cheyennes made a raid on the herd of said Bissonnette, and stole and drove away three of his brood mares, and one gelding, of the value of one hundred dollars, three of his cows, of the value of sixty dollars each, and one ox, of the value of one hundred dollars; that afterward, on the 10th of March, 1865, a party of the same Cheyennes stole and drove away from Bitter Cottonwood nine head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars each, the property of said Bissonnette. Deponent further says that on the 15th day of November, 1864, the Arapahoes stole and drove away from Deer Creek thirteen head of horses, of the value of one hundred dollars, the property of said Bissonnette; that all said thefts were committed in the Territory of Dakota and on the Platte River; and further says not.

JOHN <sup>his</sup> + BOYÉ.  
mark.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of June, 1866.

FORT LARAMIE, *Dakota Territory*.

VITAL JARROT,  
*U. S. Indian Agent.*

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette, against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoe and the United States, for losses by him sustained from depredations of said tribes of Indians.*

We, the undersigned, chiefs and headmen of the Cheyenne Indians, acting for and in behalf of our tribes and in open council, state and acknowledge that our people on three different occasions stole and took away horses and cattle belonging to Joseph Bissonnette; that about the middle of the winter, winter before the last, at Laprelle, on the North Platte, we took four head of horses to ride, and took and killed to eat four head of cattle; that about two moons later, nearly spring, we again at Bitter Cottonwood, also on the North Platte, took and carried away nine head of his horses; and again, when the grass was getting good, last spring was a year, we took from him near Fort Laramie two horses to ride and two fat cows to eat. We have never returned or paid for said stock, and we are unable to do it, being too poor; but we desire our Grand Father, the President, to pay said Bissonnette for all the above property, the amount of its value fixed by honest white men.

his  
CUT + NOSE CHIEF.  
mark.

his  
BIG + WOLF.  
mark.

his  
WAR + SHIELD.  
mark.

his  
BAD + SPOTTED HORN.  
mark.

his  
THE SHAVED + WHITE MAN.  
mark.

his  
HORSE + ROAD.  
mark.

his  
BOB +  
mark.

his  
THE + ELK THAT HOLLERS.  
mark.

Signed in my presence, and acknowledged before me this 28th day of June, A. D. 1866.

VITAL JARROT,  
*U. S. Indian Agent of the Upper Platte Agency, at North Laramie, Dakota Territory.*

*In the matter of the claim of Joseph Bissonnette against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, and the United States, for losses by him sustained from depredations of said tribes of Indians.*

We, the undersigned, chiefs and headmen of the Brulé and Ogalalla bands of Sioux, acting for and in behalf of our tribes and in open council, state and acknowledge that our people at various times, when reduced to want of horses and cattle, made raid on the Big Platte, and that in these raids they took many cattle and horses belonging to Joseph Bissonnette. We acknowledge that in the first or second moon of the fall of 1864, we took from the herd of said Bissonnette, at Deer Creek, on the North Platte, thirty-nine head of horses and mares, also four oxen to eat; that in early spring of the next year, when the whites were camped near Fort Laramie, on Little Deer Creek, we again stole some of their stock, among which of those we took and carried away was four horses belonging to said Bissonnette, one of which was a very fine war-horse, with four or five common horses. We further declare that we have never returned any of said animals to said Bissonnette, nor paid him for them, and that we have not the means to pay with; but we insist, as we did in council making the treaty, that our Great Father, the President of the United States, should pay him, said Bissonnette, the amount that honest white men should say was the worth of the property we took. And we further say, that in the full belief that our Great Father, not us, would fully indemnify said Bissonnette and others we named, we signed the treaty. We want them paid for all their losses.

his  
SPOTTED + TAIL.  
mark.

his  
SWIFT + BEAR.  
mark.

his  
DOG + HAWK.  
mark.

his  
HAWK + THUNDER.  
mark.

his  
STANDING + ELK.  
mark.

his  
TALL + MANDAN.  
mark.

his  
SHARP + NOSE.  
mark.

his  
WHITE + TAIL.  
mark.

his  
BIG + MOUTH.  
mark.

his  
THE MAN + THAT WALKS UNDER THE GROUND.  
mark.

his  
THE BLACK + WAR BONNET.  
mark.

his  
STANDING + CLOUD.  
mark.

his  
BLUE + HORSE.  
mark.

his  
BIG + HEAD.  
mark.

Signed and acknowledged before me, at Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, June the 27th, A. D. 1866.

VITAL JARROT,  
U. S. Indian Agent.