

SALARIES OF COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, AND FINANCIAL CLERK OF THE INDIAN OFFICE.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, urging an increase of the salaries of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the financial clerk of the Indian Office, and enclosing a bill to effect these objects.

MARCH 11, 1890.—Referred to the Committee on Expenditures in Interior Department.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, March 10, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in which he urges an increase in the salaries of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the financial clerk of the Indian Office, together with a draught of a bill to carry the same into effect.

I concur in the views of the Commissioner herewith submitted, and recommend the matter to the favorable consideration of Congress.

Very respectfully,

JOHN W. NOBLE,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, March 5, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to recommend that Congress be requested to provide by appropriate legislation for more adequate compensation for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and for the financial clerk of the Indian Office, and for that purpose I have prepared and submit herewith, for your consideration and approval, draught of a bill, with the request that you transmit the same, through the proper channel, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

COMMISSIONER.

In reference to the recommendation for the increase of salary of the Commissioner of Indian affairs, I would respectfully state that the duties of the Commissioner are responsible, intricate, and complex. He has charge of the disbursements, annually, of about \$7,000,000, which amount is expended either in the payment of cash to the Indians or in the purchase, under his immediate direction and supervision, of large quantities and great varieties of subsistence supplies, clothing, dry goods, agricultural implements, and a vast number of other articles, too numerous to mention, and of the transportation of them to the Indians for whom they are purchased. The Indian agents, numbering over 60, receive from him instructions for the management of their agencies; to him they must account for all funds placed in their hands, and for all property, including subsistence, clothing, stock, cattle, etc., purchased and shipped to the different agencies.

The proper development and the efficient management of the plans and methods for the educational and individual training of all the Indian youth, to prepare them for self-support and citizenship, are duties of the very greatest importance with which the head of this Bureau is charged, and which require a high degree of intelligence and study and a wise exercise of judgment and discretion. The conduct of 136 boarding and industrial schools, in which over 9,146 pupils are fed, clothed, and educated, and 103 day-schools, require his general supervision and oversight, and plans for the enlargement of school facilities and advantages, so as to reach the whole number of the Indian youth as early as practicable, must receive his careful consideration and study.

Many intricate questions relating to Indian lands, involving interpretation of treaties and laws and the examination of records for forty to sixty years, in some cases as far back as the earliest treaties made by the United States, and even back to treaties made between the Colonies and the Indians, engage his attention and require his decision. All questions of law involved in the management and civilization of the Indians are considered and determined by him, such as their lands, their internal and external affairs; their legal attitude and status among themselves or with reference to the whites; conflicts between local laws and customs of a tribe and the State laws, and between the State and Federal laws; questions of citizenship, guardianship, crimes, misdemeanors, jurisdiction; how far Indians are subject to their own laws and customs, and how far they are amenable to State and Federal laws; prosecution of persons guilty of the sale of whisky to Indians; taxation; water-right; right of way of railroads through reservations; cattle grazing; conveyances of land; contracts between Indians and whites; sale of timber on reservations; allotment of land in severalty, and many other questions too numerous to mention, involving the consideration and interpretation of the treaties or series of treaties and a volume of statutes affecting the relation of this class of population to our General Government. Numerous original bills and reports are prepared under his supervision and transmitted to Congress, and nearly every bill originating in either House of Congress, relating to Indian lands, funds, or the status of Indians, is referred to the Indian Bureau for information and report, and the President seldom signs a bill which has passed Congress, relating to Indian matters, without it first having been referred to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for report as to the existence of any reason why it should not receive Executive approval. He has sole charge of licensed traders; and, under the act of March 3,

1885, directs as to the examination and reports to the Secretary of the Interior on all Indian depredation claims which have been filed in the Bureau for the last forty years and amount to many millions of dollars.

The foregoing gives an approximate estimate of the responsible duties, and an idea of the varied nature and character of the work performed under the supervision and by the direction of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The duties and labors of the office are constantly increasing and becoming more arduous and difficult, as the progress of Indian civilization makes it necessary to deal with the race, not in their collective capacity as tribes and bands, but with the individuals who are being encouraged and led to the holding of separate estates, thus multiplying many fold the interests to be considered, developed, and protected.

The officer who conscientiously and faithfully strives to perform the duties of this office must work early and late, and can never, while he holds the position, lay aside for a moment the anxious concern—a no light burden—for the delicate trust confided to his management.

In this connection I take the liberty to call attention to the salaries paid to heads of bureaus and other officers connected with the Interior Department. The salary of the Commissioner of the General Land Office has been recommended to be increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 by the Senate Committee on Public Lands, in Report No. 346, Fifty-first Congress, first session, and that of the Assistant Commissioner of the General Land Office from \$3,000 to \$4,000. The salaries of other officers are as follows:

Commissioner of Patents,.....	\$ 5,000
Commissioner of Pensions,.....	5,000
Commissioner of Railroads,.....	4,500
Assistant Attorney-General for Interior Department.....	5,000
Director of Geological Survey,.....	6,000
Inter-state Commerce Commission, consisting of five members, each.....	7,500
Board of registration and election in the Territory of Utah, consisting of five members, each.....	5,000

I call attention to this not with the desire to intimate that the salaries paid these officers are too high, but to submit that the various and important duties of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, having charge of the welfare of 260,000 Indians, entitle him to receive a salary of at least \$5,000.

The increase in the salary of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs has been several times urged upon Congress. Secretary Lamar, in his annual report for the year 1886, says:

The office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the great responsibilities and the peculiar nature of the duties imposed upon it by law for "the management, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, of all Indian affairs and of all matters arising out of Indian relations," is one of the most trying and difficult positions in the public service, requiring constant and exacting labors and unremitting care and watchfulness. The salary of \$4,000 allowed by law is by no means commensurate with the requirements of the office, and I therefore recommend that it be increased to \$5,000 per annum, thus making it to correspond with the salaries allowed for other bureau officers of this Department, which it at least equals in importance.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER.

The Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who, under the law establishing the office (24 Stat., 200), performs also the duties of chief clerk, receives a salary of \$3,000 per annum, which I consider entirely inadequate. In enumerating partially the duties devolving upon the Commissioner I have very largely also given the duties of the Assistant Commissioner, as to him the Commissioner looks for counsel in all im-

portant matters. All decisions to be made by the commissioner are first considered by the Assistant Commissioner; with him the different chiefs of divisions consult in regard to the management of the force under their charge and the business of their divisions.

As acting chief clerk he has, under the direction of the Commissioner, the management and control of all the details of the vast machinery of the Indian service, acts as superintendent of the building in which the Indian Bureau is located, and when the Commissioner is absent from the city, either in the purchase of goods and supplies or on other business, he is Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with all the responsibility attached to that important position, and must consequently keep himself familiar with all the business of the office. For the duties of chief clerk, which are performed by him in connection with his duties as Assistant Commissioner without additional compensation, appropriations of from \$2,000 to \$2,500 per annum are made in other Bureaus of the Government as pay of chief clerk. The re-establishment of the position of chief clerk for this office has heretofore been recommended. The present Assistant Commissioner, who for a number of years was chief of the Indian division of the Interior Department, is thoroughly familiar with the business of Indian affairs, faithful, competent, and closely applies himself to the business of the Bureau, and performs duties here which in the General Land Office and other Bureaus are performed by an Assistant Commissioner and a chief clerk, whose joint compensation exceeds \$5,000. His services as Assistant Commissioner are worth at least \$4,000 per annum, and I recommend that his salary be increased to that amount.

FINANCIAL CLERK.

The financial clerk of the Indian Office, who acts at the same time as chief of the finance division, receives a salary of \$2,000, and I recommend that it be increased to \$2,250. The duties of the financial clerk are important. To him the Commissioner looks for the proper expenditure of the funds appropriated by Congress for the benefit of the Indians, and while no actual money passes through his hands his responsibilities are great. He has to see that the different agencies and schools are supplied with what is required to the extent of the appropriations made by Congress. He is held responsible by the Commissioner that no deficiency over and above the amounts appropriated by Congress is incurred. He has charge of the settlements of all claims for goods and supplies purchased and transported; for all services rendered in educating children under contract; for all claims growing out of trust funds and sale of trust lands.

Under his supervision all contracts for the delivery of goods and supplies, for the erection of agency and school buildings, are made and executed; all requisitions in payment of claims against the Indian Bureau are prepared under his supervision, as well as those for advances to disbursing officers; all estimates to Congress for funds required under treaty and otherwise are prepared under his direction, as well as all estimates for goods and supplies for the annual letting. He has to see that in paying the claims against the Indian Bureau in the purchase of goods and supplies, as well as all others, they are charged against the proper appropriations as made by Congress.

Every fund and every appropriation must be used for its own particular purpose and can not be used for any other purpose.

When this fact is considered, and when it is remembered that there

are over 350 appropriations and funds, each applicable to certain purposes only, which are specified either in the treaties or in the laws, the difficulties occurring in the management of the financial affairs of the Indians may be appreciated.

A good deal of the work of the financial clerk can not be delegated to others, but must be performed by him; to do otherwise would only result in confusion and deficiencies, as has been the case some fifteen years ago. The present financial clerk, who has held that office for over nine years, has during that time been compelled by the stress of work properly belonging to the position which he holds to work much of his time outside of office hours in order to keep up the business of the office. He earns more than he is paid. I urgently recommend that the increase of salary be granted: It has heretofore been repeatedly estimated for by the Department.

Very respectfully,

T. J. MORGAN,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

A BILL to increase the salaries of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs and of the financial clerk in the Indian Office.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the salary of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs shall be five thousand dollars per annum, and the salary of the Assistant Commissioner shall be four thousand dollars per annum, and the salary of the financial clerk in the Indian Office shall be two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars per annum.

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