

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES SENATE,

ON THE

Condition and resources of the Chippewa Indians of the State of Minnesota and the Territory of Dakota.

APRIL 14, 1880.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed (to accompany bill S. 1630).

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 9, 1880.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter addressed to this department, under date of the 8th instant, by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, upon the subject of the condition and resources of the Chippewa Indians of the State of Minnesota and the Territory of Dakota. The Commissioner recommends the consolidation of the different tribes and bands of Chippewas, located upon the reservations indicated by him, upon the White Earth Reservation, in Minnesota, and the sale of their other reservations, which are heavily timbered, for their benefit.

A draft of proposed legislation to effect the objects here referred to, which are more fully set forth in the communication of the Commissioner, is also herewith inclosed.

A similar letter has been addressed (of even date herewith) to Hon. A. M. Scales, chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House; and the subjects presented, having the full concurrence of this department, are earnestly recommended to the early and favorable consideration of Congress.

Very respectfully,

C. SCHURZ, *Secretary.*

Hon. RICHARD COKE,
Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, April 8, 1880.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a draft of a bill in duplicate for the relief of the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota and Dakota; and in connection therewith I have to say that the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota have an immense area of valuable lands, but no available financial resources to enable them to follow agricultural or other pursuits.

A large proportion of their land is covered with a very heavy growth of pine timber. The Indians of Minnesota now occupy reservations as follows, viz: White Earth, Leech Lake, Red Lake, Mille Lac, Grand Portage, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Cass Lake, Lake Winnebagoishish and White Oak Point, covering an area of 4,732,296 acres. Among these the White Earth Reservation, embracing at present an area of 796,672 acres of the finest land in the Northwest, is the only one suitable for agricultural purposes. Of the remaining reservations there are, by estimation, on Mille Lac 240,000,000 feet of pine, worth \$500,000; on the Fond du Lac, 300,000,000 feet, worth \$450,000; on Leech Lake, Cass Lake, Lake Winnebagoishish, and White Oak Point Reservation 1,000,000,000 feet, worth \$2,000,000.

The amount on the Red Lake Reservation is said to be very large, but the lands are unsurveyed and no estimate has been made of the timber.

The other two reservations will not probably sell for more than enough to remove the Indians residing thereon to the White Earth Reservation.

Should the lands be opened for entry as public lands are, they would be largely taken under the homestead law and with scrip, thus depriving both the Indians and the government of any material advantage from their sale.

The disposal of the land will enable the department, without expense to the government, to effect the removal of the Indians as proposed and to locate the whole of the Chippewas of Minnesota and Dakota numbering about 12,000 persons, on the White Earth Reservation, build them comfortable houses, supply them with cattle and agricultural implements, &c., break them land sufficient to secure their practical self-support after the first year, leave them a large surplus for future use, and at the same time open over three million acres of land for industrial purposes, farming or otherwise. The necessary machinery for two agencies would thus be abolished, and the Indians consolidated on a reservation within 20 miles of communication by rail, thus effecting a large reduction in the present expense of transporting goods to the Red Lake, Bois Forte, and Grand Portage Indians.

A measure of greater economy could not, in my judgment, be devised.

I have the honor, therefore, to recommend that a copy of said draft of a bill, together with a copy of this report (herewith), be transmitted to the respective Committees of the Senate and House on Indian Affairs, with a recommendation for favorable and early action thereon.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. TROWBRIDGE,
Commissioner.

The Hon. the SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.