

INDIAN AFFAIRS IN WYOMING.

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MEMORIAL AND JOINT RESOLUTION  
OF  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE TERRITORY OF WYOMING,  
IN RELATION TO  
*Indian affairs.*

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MARCH 6, 1876.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY WYOMING TERRITORY,  
*Cheyenne, Wyo., February 23, 1876.*

I hereby certify that the annexed paper is a true copy of house joint resolution No. 4, passed by our late legislature, and by the governor approved December 4, 1875.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of our Territory on the day above written.

[SEAL.]

G. W. FRENCH,  
*Secretary of Wyoming Territory.*

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*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

We, your memorialists, the legislative assembly of Wyoming Territory, having and reposing great confidence in the desire of your honorable body to do exact justice to all the people of all parts of these States and Territories, would most respectfully represent that the people of this Territory, who have left homes of ease and comfort in the older settlements to make homes for themselves on this frontier, and to open up and improve the public domain for settlement and to the great advantage of the Government of the United States, are a peaceable and law-abiding people, and do not hope nor expect to either break or encourage others to break any of the existing treaties of the Government with any of the tribes of Indians residing in our Territory, so long as they are considered valid by the authorities. But we not only pray, but demand it as our right, that the said Indians be also required to live within the bounds of said treaties and their reservations, to the end that our settlers shall be relieved from their periodical incursions, ostensibly made for the purpose of hunting, but really made for the purpose of plunder, murder, and all crimes of which the Indians are capable, (and their names are legion.) Our people have been slain by dozens, and their property destroyed to the extent of over one-half million of dollars in value, (as

actual statistics can be produced to show,) within the last few years, and that, too, when the Government were feeding and pampering these same Indians at the expense of the public Treasury, as well outside the provisions of any treaty as by the provisions of treaties, which they have lived only to break from day to day, in defiance of the Government and under the immediate notice of the agents sent out to control and feed them.

While all the power of the Government has been threatened, and in a measure used, to prevent white men from trespassing on their lands, so uselessly held by them to the exclusion of those who would mine for precious metals, (which it is well known exist there,) and who would cultivate the soil and make valuable territory thereof, these lawless pets have been allowed to leave their reservations (so called) whenever they would, to prey upon and devastate the property, lives, and peaceful occupations of these frontier settlers, with the virtual consent of their guardians, the agents of the Government. While the blood-seeking brave (God save the word!) and his filthy squaw have fed at the public expense in those hatch-holes of fraud known as agencies, the widow and children of the white man slain by the treacherous Indian have been obliged to depend on their own energies or the bounty of neighbors for the necessaries of life.

We would humbly suggest that you must believe it reasonable, in view of these facts, that this people should eventually lose confidence in a government which promises to protect them and their rights, and yet heeds not their cry for succor; and that they should be finally led to fear that their necessities were being suppressed for some purpose, political or otherwise, not comprehended by our bill of rights as American citizens.

The facts and advice furnished by our governor, Delegate, and leading citizens have been set aside or not listened to or acted upon, while the sayings and wishes of uninformed benevolent churchmen and others (uninformed on this subject) have been taken for guidance, to the damage and prejudice of our Territory. Treaties have been made in the interest of the Indians alone, and the settlers forced to respect them, while the one for whose benefit they were made has been allowed to break them, and he has not been held accountable therefor. The interest of the white man, who is subservient to and a part of the Government, has been made secondary in importance to that of the defiant enemy of the same Government. We would respectfully represent to your honorable body that we believe this to be the result of the present policy of the Government in regard to its relations to these irresponsible and ignorant beings, neither making them citizens, and, as such, responsible for their misdeeds, nor considering them aliens under obligations to keep the peace with the people of the United States.

If these Indians are to be fed at public expense, then we would ask that they may be compelled to accept a reservation sufficient for their needs for grazing their ponies, which is all the use they could make of it, and to remain thereon, and that all or nearly all of their present reserve be opened to settlement and improvement, to the end that Wyoming may become what her natural resources entitle her to be, and what the development of millions of acres of the garden-spot of the West within her borders, but now useless, would soon enable her to become, a great and prosperous State, furnishing from her mineral and agricultural wealth to the national Treasury enough to feed all the Indians now in the Territory and leave a balance to our credit.

In behalf of a long-suffering people, who have been misrepresented

by so-called philanthropists from abroad, and by rapacious speculators who have cast their lot among us for a while, we would ask that these Indians shall be removed from among us entirely, or else made amenable to the common law of the land, and treated as reasonable beings, or confined and controlled in the same manner as any body of lawless and uncultured white men would and should be under the same circumstances.

We would ask that our Delegate in Congress, who is the only medium of communication which we have to directly reach your honorable body, may be listened to and heeded with at least as much respect and consideration, as some Indian-loving fanatic of the East, who knows nothing of the situation in reality as it exists, or some person whose interests require treaties and vast territories for the Indians, with all the paraphernalia of agencies and all the necessary appendages belonging to and going with the present system of managing Indians.

With all due deference to the wisdom of Congress and the Executive, we earnestly believe that, were the truth known by your honorable body, as it exists in reality in regard to these matters, Indian treaties, Indian agencies, and Indian wars would soon become things of the past.

We would earnestly call the attention of your honorable body to the message of his excellency Governor John M. Thayer, of Wyoming, to this legislature, and more especially that part which treats of the Indian question, wherein the subject-matter herein set forth is treated of in a fair and impartial manner by one who has been just long enough among us to understand and appreciate the situation in its true light, and who could not feel any undue interest in the matter.

Hoping that, because of the existence of the facts as herein set forth, your honorable body will devise such means of action in the premises as in your wisdom you may deem necessary to remedy the present state of affairs in this Territory and on this frontier.

And we, your memorialists, would ever pray.

*Resolved*, That Hon. G. W. French, secretary of Wyoming Territory, be, and he is hereby, instructed to furnish Hon. W. R. Steele, our Delegate in Congress, with certified copies of this memorial and resolution for each branch of Congress, and one for His Excellency U. S. Grant, President of the United States, and that Hon. W. R. Steele be requested to call the attention of the President and members of both houses and the General and Lieutenant-General of the Army to the facts herein set forth, and urge upon them prompt and decisive action in the matter, and use all honorable means in his power to forward the settlement of this vexed question and opening of the northern and all other parts of our Territory to settlement and use.

N. L. ANDREWS,  
*Speaker of the House.*

E. L. PEASE,  
*President of the Council.*

Approved December 4, 1875.

JOHN M. THAYER,  
*Governor.*