

THE REMOVAL OF THE SIOUX INDIANS.

M E S S A G E

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A letter from the Secretary of the Interior in reference to the removal of the Sioux Indians.

DECEMBER 14, 1876.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives :

In answer to the resolution of the 7th instant of the House of Representatives, asking to be informed "whether any and what negotiations have been or are being made with the Sioux Indians for their removal to the Indian Territory, and under what authority the same has been or is being made," I submit herewith a report received from the Secretary of the Interior, which contains, it is believed, all the information in possession of his Department touching the matter of the resolution.

U. S. GRANT.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, *December 14, 1876.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 12, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by Executive reference, of a resolution of the House of Representatives, dated 7th instant, as follows :

On motion of Mr. Mills,

Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested, if not incompatible with the public interest, to inform this House whether any and what negotiations have been or are being made with the Sioux Indians for their removal to the Indian Territory, and under what authority the same has been or is being done ;

And in response to the reference respectfully invite attention to the inclosed copy of a report, dated the 11th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to whom the subject was referred, which contains, it is believed, all the information in possession of this Department touching the matter of the resolution.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. CHANDLER,

Secretary.

The PRESIDENT, *Executive Mansion.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., December 11, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by Department reference, of House resolution dated the 7th instant—

That the President of the United States be requested, if not incompatible with the public interest, to inform this House whether any and what negotiations have been or are being made with the Sioux Indians for their removal to the Indian Territory, and under what authority the same has been or is being done;

And in accordance with your direction submit the following report:

In the act of Congress, approved August 15, 1876, making appropriations for the Indian department, among the various provisions thereof it is provided that hereafter there shall no further appropriations be made for the subsistence of the different tribes of Sioux Indians unless they shall agree—

First. To relinquish all right and claim to any country outside of the boundaries of the permanent reservation secured to them by their treaty of 1828.

Second. To relinquish a portion of said reservation lying west of 103d meridian of longitude.

Third. To grant the right of way for several roads over the reservation from points on the Missouri River to the part that may be thus relinquished.

Fourth. To receive their supplies for subsistence at such suitable places in the vicinity of the Missouri as the President may designate; and

Fifth. To enter into some stipulation, agreement, or arrangement calculated and designed to enable them to become self-supporting; and for these purposes \$20,000 are appropriated.

With the view to effect the object of this provision of the law, the President, soon after its passage, appointed a commission composed of the following gentlemen: Hon. George W. Manypenny, H. C. Bulis, esq., Newton Edmonds, esq., Right Reverend H. B. Whipple, A. G. Boone, esq., Hon. A. S. Gaylord, and J. W. Daniels, esq.; and these commissioners, under full instructions furnished by this office, bearing date the 24th of August last, shortly proceeded to the discharge of the duty devolved upon them.

No official report of their doings has yet been communicated to the Department or this office by that commission. Their first council was held with the Indians at the Red Cloud agency early in September, where propositions in consonance with the condition stated in the law referred to, were presented to the Indians and finally accepted by them.

Subsequently other Sioux agencies were visited and councils held, and the same propositions submitted, with like results. Although not officially so advised, it is understood by this office that the commission, having finished their work some time since, agreed to convene in this city on the 9th instant, to report the result of their proceedings, and it is thought that most if not all of them are present at this date.

In regard to one of the subjects of negotiation, that relating to an arrangement to enable the Indians to become self-supporting, it was deemed that an arrangement or agreement best calculated to subserve the end devised would be one providing for the removal of these Indians at an early day to the Indian Territory, for the obvious reason that their main dependence must ultimately be derived from the cultivation of the soil, not practicable in their own country, which is so unsuited for such purpose; and it was held that the better climate and superior soil of the Indian Territory, and the fact of that territory being forever secured

to the Indian people, should be inducements for them to enter into a measure of the kind indicated.

The commissioners were accordingly authorized to enter into an agreement with the Indians for such a removal; but if it could not be accomplished without first affording them an opportunity to visit the Indian Territory, and the commissioners should be of the opinion that the visit would probably secure their assent to the proposition, the commissioners were further authorized to send, under careful and competent direction, or to take, a delegation of the most influential chiefs and headmen to the said Indian Territory.

Under that authority a subcommittee, Messrs. Boone and Daniels, with E. A. Howard as disbursing agent, accompanied by about ninety Indians, visited the territory in question; and they lately returned therefrom, the Indians being favorably impressed with what they saw, as I am informed by the subcommittee who reached this city on the 9th instant.

It may be proper to remark that the Indians were given to understand that any agreement entered into with them would not be binding on either of the parties thereto, until approved by the President and Congress. The commission will, doubtless, in a short time submit a full report; which, when received, will be forwarded immediately to the Department.

I herewith return the resolution of the House referred by the Department.

Very respectfully, &c.,

J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. the SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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