

REMOVAL OF CERTAIN TRIBES OF INDIANS.

[To accompany bill H. R. 5002.]

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LETTER

FROM

THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

RELATIVE TO

*The removal of certain Indians in the States of Oregon, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and the Territories of Washington and Dakota.*

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MAY 27, 1878.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, May 23, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a copy of a bill providing for the removal and consolidation of certain Indians in the States of Oregon, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and the Territories of Washington and Dakota, which I have caused to be prepared at the verbal request of the House Committee on Indian Affairs.

The bill has three objects in view:

First. The reduction of the number of agencies, and, consequently, a large annual reduction of expense in the management of their affairs.

Second. Their consolidation upon reservations where the most perfect instrumentalities may be thrown around them, and measures devised looking to their complete civilization and preparation to assume intelligently the duties of citizenship; and

Third. The sale of the lands vacated, and the use of the funds arising therefrom in their removal and settlement and in the creation of a permanent fund, the interest of which will, in a large degree, render them self-supporting and independent of the charities of the government.

To secure the end sought, it is proposed to enter into negotiations with the Indians in Northeast Washington Territory, now occupying the Colville reservation, for the relinquishment, for a stipulated sum, of a large portion of their present reservation, now covering some 2,800,000 acres of land, and their settlement upon a largely-diminished reservation on or near the Columbia River, in the northeastern portion of their present reservation. A concentration of the Indians belonging at this agency and a consequent reduction of annual expense is expected to result from this measure.

There are on the coast of Washington Territory, at present, thirteen reservations, to wit, Neah Bay, Puyallup Shoalwater Bay, Quinaielt, S'Kokomish, Chehalis, Squaxins, Nisqually, Muckleshoot, Port Madison, Lummi, Swinomish, and Tulalip, containing, in all, 333,508 acres, on which there are about 6,000 Indians, who are under the charge of five agents. Of these agencies I think it advisable to retain two only; one at Neah Bay for the fish-eating Indians, and one at Puyallup for those who are inclined or may be induced to follow agricultural pursuits.

These reservations, containing 41,102 acres, are deemed amply sufficient to accommodate all of the Indians who will be induced to settle upon reservations. Many of these Indians are good farmers, and capable, in most respects, to become citizens, of which privilege a large number will doubtless avail themselves, and for whom provision in this respect is made in the 4th section of the bill, enabling them to take homesteads on the lands to be vacated under restrictions as to power of alienation, &c., which are deemed sufficient for their protection, and which are extended to all of the Indians named in the bill.

In his report of November 20, 1877, in regard to the consolidation of these Indians, Inspector Watkins says:

Under proper management I think the Puyallup reservation susceptible of maintaining 4,000 Indians from the products of the soil. Probably not over three-fourths of this number would, however, be gathered on this reservation. I estimate that 2,000 would naturally go to Neah Bay, 1,000 would avail themselves of the provisions of the Indian homestead act, which would leave not exceeding 3,000 to be gathered on this reservation.

Mr. Watkins estimates the cost of removing and settling these Indians at \$100,000. This estimate is, in my judgment, in excess of the amount necessary to effect their consolidation, and I have, consequently, provided in the bill for the appropriation of \$50,000 for the purpose. Mr. Watkins estimates that the lands vacated by these Indians, as provided in the bill, will sell for at least \$1,000,000.

With reference to the Indians in Oregon, the bill proposes the consolidation of the Siletz Indians and other Indians on the coast on the Grand Ronde reservation, where there is ample room for them, the reservation containing 61,440 acres. There are living upon this reservation at present 755 Indians. The Siletz and other coast Indians whom it is proposed to remove to Grand Ronde number about 1,600; one-half of whom, Inspector Watkins estimates, will take advantage of the homestead provision of the bill. There will be 225,000 acres of land vacated by the Siletz Indians if the consolidation is effected.

It is also proposed to remove the Warm Spring and Umatilla Indians to Yakama, in Washington Territory, which reservation contains 800,000 acres, one-half of which is fine lands, on which the bill, if carried into effect, will consolidate about 5,300 Indians, at an estimated cost, by this office, of \$25,000, and release for sale 722,800 acres; that portion of the same belonging to the Umatilla reservation containing a large proportion of the finest lands in the State.

The condition of the Utes of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, belonging on the Ute reservation in Colorado, has for a long time been suggestive of open hostilities. Their lands are rich in silver and other minerals, and it has been impossible to protect them against encroachments, which are every day increasing the prospects of armed difficulties. About three thousand of the Indians of this reservation are living thereon, and the remainder, about 1,200, are roaming over New Mexico and Arizona, very much to the annoyance of the citizens of said Territories, to whom they are a constant source of dread, and who have for a year

past been appealing to the department for their removal, or that troops might be stationed in the vicinity for their protection.

The reservation embraces 11,728,800 acres, and extends across the whole western portion of the State, a barrier to communication between the sections east and west, and an obstacle to the development of the country.

Two agencies, the White River in the northern portion and the Los Pinos in the central portion of the reserve, have been maintained for a number of years, and during the present year steps have been taken to establish a third in the extreme southern portion of the reserve. These agencies have been maintained at a very great cost; the expense of transporting supplies from Laramie, on the Central Pacific Road, to White River agency being at the rate of four cents per pound, and from Kansas City to Los Pinos at seven and one-half cents, and from the same point to the Southern Ute agency nine cents per pound.

It is proposed to negotiate with these Indians for the extinguishment of their title to the lands in Colorado and their removal to a reservation, suited to their numbers, in the Indian Territory. Two agencies will be abolished by the movement contemplated with the Utes, which have been maintained at a large expense, and should they be settled in the Indian Territory, even as far west as the Wichita agency, an average saving in the cost of transporting supplies will be made as against their present locations of not less than four cents per pound.

It is also proposed to remove the Sac and Fox Indians, of whom there are about 400 in Iowa under charge of an agent, on a section of land purchased by them, and a large number of the same tribe now roaming in Kansas, to the reservation set aside for them in the Indian Territory by the treaty of February 18, 1867 (15 Stats., p. 495), and it is also proposed to remove to the same location the Sac and Fox Indians who are now occupying 24,014 acres of land in Nebraska.

There are seven reservations and three agencies for the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, and they are residing on reservations as follows: White Earth, Red Lake, Leech Lake, Mille Lac, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and Bois Forte. There are also two scattering bands belonging at White Earth, located in Todd and Otter Tail Counties, in said State. The Turtle Mountain band of Pembina Indians, in Dakota, whom it is understood have never ceded their lands, are also a part of the same people, and it is the purpose of the bill to consolidate them, together with the Indians above mentioned, upon one reservation in Minnesota.

For this purpose it is designed to negotiate with the Red Lake Indians, whose title to their lands has never been extinguished, for the cession of all their lands except a tract of about thirty-six townships within the boundaries named in the bill, which it is the intention to join to the White Earth reservation by granting to them the intervening fractional townships 147, 148, and 149, north, ranges 37, 38, and 39, west, and thus to consolidate them with the White Earth reservation, and on the reservation thus consolidated to settle the bands heretofore named; effecting thereby the consolidation of about 9,000 Indians at White Earth reservation, which will, as enlarged by the bill, be of sufficient capacity to allow an allotment of 160 acres to each person settling thereon, as provided by the treaty of 1863 with the White Earth Indians, and for which patents, to the amount of 160 acres each, will issue upon compliance with the conditions specified in the treaty above named.

Three of the reservations in Minnesota, namely, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage, are now attached to the La Pointe agency in Wisconsin, in which State there are the La Pointe, Red Cliff, Lac Court

Oreille, and Lac de Flambeau reservations belonging to the same agency. In addition to the consolidation to be effected by the removal of the Indians of the first three reservations to White Earth, it is proposed to remove the Lac de Flambeau Indians, at their option, to La Pointe or Lac Court Oreille, on each of which reservations allotments in severalty have been made.

It is not intended to disturb the Red Cliff reservation, which was originally composed of only four sections of land, nearly all of which has been allotted, and for which patents will shortly issue. No reduction in the number of agencies will be accomplished by the consolidation of the La Pointe bands as proposed, but a large reduction in the traveling-expenses of the agent, who has now, in going to and returning from the several reservations to the agency, to travel about 2,500 miles, which, by the consolidation can, by the construction of a few miles of wagon-road, be reduced to about 300.

A large saving will also be made in the transportation of annuity goods.

The Lac de Flambeau reservation contains 69,824 acres of land, which will be vacated under this act.

With regard to the Turtle Mountain Indians and their claim to a large quantity of land in Northern Dakota, I submit, herewith, a separate report, with accompanying papers, which had been prepared in response to your reference of March 13, 1878, in which all the facts in their case are presented, fully, in my judgment, warranting the negotiations provided for herein.

The bill as prepared provides for an appropriation, to be met by the United States, of a sum considered sufficient to meet the expenses attending the necessary negotiations to accomplish the objects sought to be attained, and for the removal of the Sac and Fox Indians in Kansas and Nebraska. These are, with the exception of the sale of the lands, which is to be made through the General Land Office, the only expenses attending the execution of the provisions of the bill which will not be reimbursed to the United States; provision being made in the bill for the survey and appraisal of the lands vacated under this act and for the removal and settlement of the Indians on the reservations on which consolidations are to be made, the costs of which are to be reimbursed out of the proceeds of the lands acquired by the negotiations or ceded in trust to be sold for the benefit of the Indians.

The Indians named in the bill now occupy 36 reservations, containing 21,922,507 acres, under the charge of 20 agents, with the attendant corps of teachers and other employés.

Upon the reduction proposed by the bill they will occupy 9 reservations, containing 4,239,052 acres of land, and under the charge of 9 agents, all of whom are now provided for by law. A reduction of 25 reservations, 11 agencies, and the opening to settlement under the terms of the bill of 17,642,455 acres of land will thus be effected.

An annual saving of about \$84,000 will also be effected by these consolidations in the expenses of the employés at the agencies discontinued. Large savings will also be made in the transportation of supplies; and the reduction in expense, after making a liberal allowance for an increase of teachers and laborers at the several consolidated agencies, is estimated at \$120,000 per annum.

The timber upon the reservations in Wisconsin and Minnesota is very valuable, and the same remark applies to the timber in all the States and Territories affected by the bill.

The arable lands are also very desirable for settlement, and it is anti-

pated that, if they are properly appraised and sold for their value, the surplus, after refunding all advances made by the government, as provided in the bill, if properly invested, will be sufficient to render the Indians in the main independent of the government.

Of the 21,942,560 acres of land for which it is the intention to enter into negotiations, 2,800,000 acres are embraced in the Colville reserve in Oregon, 800,000 acres of which, it is designed, shall be held as a reservation for Indians now thereon, and 11,724,800 acres belong to the Utes in Colorado, for whom a reservation of about 800,000 acres will be needed in the Indian Territory. For these lands a sum in gross is directed to be paid, and there will thus be restored to the public domain 13,000,000 acres of land, leaving 4,692,455 acres of land to be sold for the creation of a permanent fund for the Indians.

Until they have attained a far greater degree of civilization than they now possess, I can discover no plea upon which the government can avoid caring for and making appropriations, annually, in aid of their support and to further their Christianization and civilization. The most available means of which I can conceive to accomplish this result is by their consolidation as proposed, and the sale of the land now occupied by them, and the investment of the funds in the bonds of the United States.

The lands, if restored directly to the public domain, would be largely taken under the homestead laws. No direct revenue would be derived by the government from their appropriation under said law, but an indirect advantage would in time arise from an increase of population and a consequent increase in the amount produced and consumed in the country.

All these advantages will accrue more speedily to the government if the lands are sold as provided in the bill, and by the investment of the proceeds of the same for the practical support of the Indians will, at the same time, be secured without an annual appropriation from the Treasury for the purpose.

I inclose herewith copy of Inspector Watkins's report with regard to the Indians of Washington Territory and Oregon, together with the report in the matter of the Turtle Mountain Chippewas, with accompanying papers.

The letter of Mr. Bottineau is also returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. A. HAYT,  
*Commissioner.*

The honorable the SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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