

1884-199

L E T T E R
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

Letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs relative to affairs of Indians in Lake Winnibigoshish and Leech Lake Indian Reservations.

JUNE 6, 1884.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, June 4, 1884.

SIR: Under date of 2d February last I had the honor to submit for the consideration and action of the Congress a report of 19th December, 1883, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with accompanying papers upon the subject of damages resulting to the Indians upon the Lake Winnibigoshish and Leech Lake Indian Reservations on account of the construction of reservoirs by the Government upon their lands. In this communication certain moneys were recommended to be appropriated for the settlement of present damages ascertained and stated, and also for compensation annually hereafter.

This correspondence and papers will be found in House Ex. Doc. No. 76 of the current session.

I now have the honor to transmit copy of a further communication of 3d instant, with accompanying papers, from the Office of Indian Affairs, in which the Commissioner expresses the opinion that the exigencies of the case demand immediate attention.

I commend the subject to the consideration of the Congress.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

H. M. TELLER,
Secretary.

The PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., June 3, 1884.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the inclosed copy of a letter from Agent C. P. Luse, dated White Earth Agency, Minn., May 23, 1884, with copy of correspondence between Flatmouth, head chief at Leech Lake, and Governor Hubbard and himself concerning the building of the dam at Leech Lake and resultant damages.

The exigencies of this case, in my opinion, demand immediate atten-

tion. This office submitted its last report on this subject on the 19th of December last and recommended an appropriation of \$26,800 by Congress to pay for the present damages, and that annually hereafter an appropriation of \$26,800 be made in order to carry out the award of the commission appointed by you December 22, 1882, to re-examine and ascertain the damages accruing to the Chippewa Indians residing upon Lake Winnibigoshish and Leech Lake Reservations, in the State of Minnesota, growing out of the construction of reservoirs thereon under the provisions of the act of June 14, 1880 (21 Stats., 193), and March 3, 1881 (21 Stats., 48). For full report of action of the Department see House Ex. Doc. No. 76, Forty-eighth Congress, first session. I respectfully suggest that the attention of Congress be called to the subject and urged to take definite action thereon looking to the relief of the Indians interested.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. L. STEVENS,
Acting Commissioner.

The honorable SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,
White Earth Agency, Minn., May 24, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith copies of correspondence between Flatmouth, head chief at Leech Lake, and Governor Hubbard, recently received from the overseer at Leech Lake, also copy of letter to me, all concerning damages of the dam at Leech Lake. I send this, not from any actual fear of great violence being committed by this band, as I do not apprehend it, but that the Department may be aware of all facts touching this subject.

Very respectfully,

C. P. LUSE,
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. H. PRICE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington.

LAKE LEECH AGENCY, *May 12, 1884.*

Maj. C. P. LUSE,
U. S. Ind. Agent:

DEAR SIR: So you may know what I write to Gov. Hubbard, I send you a copy of the same written for me by Mr. Gilfillan. I have not or did not understand the two commissioners that have been sent here to be empowered to act for the Government and make a bargain which would be binding on the Government; therefore did not act towards them as commissioners to treat with us. I understood they come merely for the purpose of ascertaining what the damage might be and report, but that final action would be taken after we had seen our Great Father, and we, the Indians, had come to an understanding with him. The copies I send will explain themselves; you are our agent and we wish you to assist us; we are placed under you as your children and you represent the Great Father here, and we wish you to assist us, that justice may be done us.

Yours respectfully,

NE GON E BIN AIS, his x mark.

Witness:
JOHN BEAULIEA.

STATE OF MINNESOTA, EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Saint Paul, May 6, 1884.

DEAR SIR: I am directed by the governor to request you to interpret to Flatmouth and the other chiefs the following:

"The Secretary of the Interior acknowledges receipt of the request of the Indians

to visit Washington. He referred the governor's letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for his opinion; the Commissioner declined to recommend the visit; the Secretary therefore refuses to authorize it."

The Commissioner states his reasons as follows:

"In view of the fact that two commissioners have been appointed to adjust this matter, I do not think any good results would be derived from such a visit, and therefore do not feel warranted in recommending the same.

Very truly, yours, &c.,

S. P. JENNISON,
Gov. Prv. Sec.

WM. BONGA, Esq.

LEECH LAKE, WHITE EARTH AGENCY,
May 12, 1884.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: To-day the letter has been read to me which I believe was sent to you by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from Washington. I thank you, however, for having interceded, according to my request, that I should pay a visit to Washington, although ineffectual.

I hear that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs is not pleased with my request. I tell the truth indeed about the Indians being damaged by the dams; the damage has already come to me. Indeed very much now the Great Father makes me afraid—me who am an Indian—by what he does; probably I have now made 1,500 pounds sugar, some families 2,000 pounds.

But this matter of damage for the dam has been dragging along now for more than two years unsettled, something that no person should ever do.

The dam is already reported finished and the gates being made, and many fish are reported dying on the far side of the dam, where the water has been shut off, and is very low. I only wish to make a sale or valuation of the damages. So I see this matter is again passed over, slighted by the Great Father; that he pays no attention to it. I intend what I am now about to say I speaking for myself alone, and not for any of my fellow Indians. Within two weeks the gates will be finished and the water will begin to rise. I intend to go and forbid it. I am not angry, and let none of the whites make the mistake of thinking I am angry; I speak for myself alone.

I ask you now, my friend, to cause this to be printed in both the printing-offices that the whites may read it.

That is all. I salute you.

NE GON E BIN AIS or FLATMOUTH.

Governor HUBBARD.