

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

In response to the resolution of the 20th instant, a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs relative to the Indians of the La Pointe Agency, in Wisconsin.

JANUARY 27, 1890.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 25, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Senate resolution of 20th instant, in the following words:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, instructed to inform the Senate, at his earliest convenience, whether it is true that the Indians within the jurisdiction of the La Pointe Agency in Wisconsin are in a state of destitution and suffering; and, if it be true, what amount is required to afford them adequate relief; and what relief, if any, he has to suggest or recommend in the premises.

In response thereto I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of a communication of 24th instant from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to whom the matter was referred, which contains the information desired by the Senate.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

GEO. CHANDLER,
Acting Secretary.

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., January 24, 1890.

SIR: By your reference of the 21st instant for early report, I have the honor to be in receipt of Senate resolution as follows:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, instructed to inform the Senate at his earliest convenience whether it is true that the Indians within the jurisdiction of the La Pointe Agency in Wisconsin are in a state of destitution and suffering; and, if it be true, what amount is required to afford them adequate relief; and what relief, if any, he has to suggest or recommend in the premises.

In reply the Department is informed that under date of the 4th instant, M. A. Leahy, United States Indian agent at the La Pointe

Agency, Wisconsin, submitted to this office estimates for the subsistence and clothing of the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior for the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890, viz: estimates for thirty days' rations for immediate relief, \$10,074.94; for rations from January 8 to June 30, 1890, \$70,077.39, and for clothing for the same period, \$12,601.85, aggregating the sum of \$122,754.18.

The agent states that the thirty days' rations referred to should be provided at once, as many of these Indians are in a starving condition, especially the women and children, the aged and otherwise feeble; also that there is a pressing need of the blankets and clothing to protect them from the rigors of the severe winter weather which is already upon them and that they should be provided with as little delay as possible.

On the 9th instant this office submitted a copy of this communication to the Department, with the statement that owing to the fact that all timber sales have been suspended at the said agency, these Indians are left without support. That heretofore they have supported themselves by contracting for cutting and selling the timber on the several reservations, but owing to the irregularities of last year, in the cutting or contracting for cutting, no contracts were authorized to be made this winter; that they have no other means of support, and, that during the winter of 1887-'88 the Indians of the La Pointe Agency received \$428,000 for timber cut upon the reservations, and during the winter of 1888-'89 \$143,000. The opinion of this office was expressed that an appropriation of \$75,000 will be sufficient to relieve their necessities and keep them from suffering, and, with this end in view, recommended that Congress be requested to provide an appropriation in the sum named, by a joint resolution.

The above communication, with accompanying papers, was transmitted by the Department to the Secretary of the Treasury, and on the 10th instant the said Secretary inclosed the same to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the consideration of Congress.

The report and accompanying papers were referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and will be found in H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 99, Fifty-first Congress, first session.

The rations and clothing required are for Indians located upon the Bad River, Red Cliff, Lac Court Oreilles, Fon du Lac, Grand Portage, and Lac du Flambeau Reservations, and number 3,843 souls.

In connection with the foregoing, I desire to call attention to the joint resolution submitted by this office for the relief of the above named Indians, as shown in H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 99, Fifty-first Congress, first session, which provides "that the amount hereby appropriated shall be re-imbursed to the United States out of the moneys hereafter realized from the sale of land or timber of such of the bands of Indians as have received the benefit of this appropriation."

About fifteen hundred of the Indians occupying the reservation under the jurisdiction of the La Pointe Agency have taken land in severalty and received their patents. A large number of these have cut, or allowed to be cut under contracts, the timber from their lands and squandered the money received for said timber, while others hold the patent for their allotment and have the rights conferred by their patents to their individual allotment and the timber thereon. These two classes having received their share, or at least an individual share of the tribal estate, have no interest in the unallotted lands and consequently to the timber thereon, unless there should be a surplus of lands after all of the individuals of the tribe shall have received their allotment, and

their interest would be confined to such surplus lands. It seems therefore desirable that some discrimination should be exercised in affording relief to these people, if they are to pay back to the United States the money expended for that purpose from the proceeds which may arise from the sale of timber on the unallotted lands, under proposed legislation for that purpose. Therefore, and in view of the foregoing statement, in making the appropriation, Congress should specify the method by which the United States are to be re-imbursed and what restrictions, if any, shall be placed upon the expenditure of the money to secure to the United States a re-imbursement.

The Senate resolution is hereby returned.

Very respectfully,

T. J. MORGAN,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.