

MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING

A report of the Secretary of the Interior asking an appropriation to supply a deficit in the amount held on Indian account, caused by the failure of Selden, Withers & Co., with whom it was deposited.

FEBRUARY 20, 1855.—Read, referred to the Committee on Finance, and ordered to be printed

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

I communicate herewith a letter of the Secretary of the Interior, and accompanying paper, for the consideration of Congress.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, *February 17, 1855.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, February 17, 1855.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to you, herewith, a copy of a communication, dated the 15th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and, in view of the facts therein set forth, recommend that Congress be requested to make the appropriation of \$4,400 asked for to pay a deficit in the amount of certificates, coupons for interest on stocks, &c., held on Indian account, which was on deposit with Selden, Withers & Co., bankers in this city—the United States to be reimbursed as the funds may be recovered of that firm.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. McCLELLAND,

Secretary.

To the PRESIDENT.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Office Indian Affairs, February 15, 1855.

SIR: In my report of the 2d instant I informed you of the practice which had grown up, under the requirements of certain regulations respecting Indian conveyances, of depositing money in banking institutions in payment of Indian reserves, to await investigations pre-

paratory to a decision of pending applications for the approval of contracts for the same, and of the risk of loss which the practice superinduced "from the failure of the drawers or drawees, or other casualties."

Under this practice, it appears that the disbursing agent of the Indian Office, prior to the 4th of March, 1853, had been in the habit of depositing, to the credit of the Commissioner, with Selden, Withers & Co., for collection, drafts, coupons for interest on stocks held on Indian account, &c. My attention having been called to the subject in consequence of your decision adverse to the claim of the Messrs. Ewings to the purchase money paid on behalf of A. Coquillard for the reserve of Pierre Leclerc, I have procured from Selden, Withers & Co. an exhibit of the state of the account between this office and that firm, from which it appears they owe a balance of four thousand four hundred dollars (\$4,400) on account of drafts, checks, or moneys deposited to await the decision of certain applications for the approval of the sales of Indian reserves. Included in that amount is the sum of \$800, being the amount of a draft collected by them on account of the *principal* due by said Coquillard for Leclerc's reserve, and which, with the interest now in the hands of the disbursing clerk of the department, you direct, in your decision of the 1st instant, shall be remitted to the Indian agent for payment to the heirs of Leclerc.

It is proper that money thus due Indians should, as soon as their cases are disposed of, be promptly remitted; but as Selden, Withers & Co. have suspended payment, and as it is not known when they will resume, I respectfully recommend that an estimate for the sum of \$4,400 (the amount of their deficit) may be sent to Congress, with a recommendation that an appropriation of that amount may be made, to be refunded to the treasury when the same shall have been collected from the firm of Selden, Withers & Co.

I deem it but proper here to state that the deposits above referred to were not taken up in the accounts of Mr. Miller, disbursing agent, and of course formed no part of the money turned over by him to his successor; and as there was no record of the deposits in this office, I had no knowledge of the money being there until recently, otherwise I should have ordered them transferred to Mr. Kelly, the present disbursing agent of this department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. MANYPENNY,
Commissioner.

Hon. R. McCLELLAND,
Secretary of the Interior.