

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A copy of a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, relative to a proposed treaty with certain Indians of Middle Oregon, for a relinquishment of certain rights secured to them by treaty.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 442.]

JUNE 20, 1864.—Ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., May 16, 1864.

SIR: I return herewith House bill No. 442, "to authorize the President of the United States to negotiate with certain Indians of Middle Oregon for a relinquishment of certain rights secured to them by treaty," which was referred to this department, by you, for information as to "the necessity of this act."

In answer to your inquiry I transmit herewith a copy of a communication of the 13th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; also a copy of the annual report of that officer for 1863, representing the necessity that exists for the proposed treaty.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. P. USHER, *Secretary.*

Hon. J. R. DOOLITTLE,
Chairman of Committee on Indian Affairs, U. S. Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office of Indian Affairs, May 13, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by reference from you, of House bill No. 442, entitled "An act to authorize the President of the United States to negotiate with certain Indians in Middle Oregon for the relinquishment of certain rights secured to them by treaty," upon which Hon. J. R. Doolittle, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, asks, "What is the necessity of this act?"

By the first article of the treaty of June 9, 1855, (U. S. Statutes at Large, vol. 12, p. 946,) the right was reserved to the Indians not only to take fish in the streams running through and bordering on their reservation, but also to fish at all other stations in common with citizens of the United States. The right was also reserved to them to hunt, gather roots and berries, and to pasture their

stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens. Under this right to leave their reservations for the purposes stated, the Indians have been in the habit of visiting the white settlements at great distances from their reservation, and procuring whiskey in large quantities, from the effects of which they not only become demoralized themselves, but they have also become a great annoyance to the whites. A treaty is therefore proposed to secure a relinquishment of this right. This subject was alluded to in my annual report for 1863, at page 6, to which reference is had; also to the report of Superintendent Huntington, for the same year, at pages 48 and 49.

The necessity for the proposed treaty is so fully set forth in the above-named reports as to render it unnecessary for me to enlarge upon the subject.

I return herewith the bill.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. P. DOLE, *Commissioner.*

Hon. J. P. USHER,

Secretary of the Interior.