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Report from the Secretary of War, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 10th instant, in relation to the payment of Indian annuities in goods, &c

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REPORT

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN COMPLIANCE

*With a resolution of the Senate of the 10th instant, in relation to the  
payment of Indian annuities in goods, &c.*

JANUARY 17, 1838.

Read, and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
January 16, 1838.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in answer to the resolution of the Senate, of the 10th inst., requiring information respecting the payment of Indian annuities in goods, during the past year.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

J. R. POINSETT.

Hon. R. M. JOHNSON,  
*President of the Senate.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Office Indian Affairs, January 16, 1838.*

SIR: In obedience to your direction, I have the honor to report on the resolution of the Senate of the 10th inst., calling for information respecting the payment of Indian annuities in goods, during the past year.

The accompanying tabular statement shows the names of the tribes, the aggregate amount of the annuities of each, the amount offered in goods, and the tribes by which it was accepted in goods. The copies of the instructions to the acting superintendent of Indian affairs, and the principal military disbursing agent in Michigan, herewith transmitted, exhibit the reasons for the measures adopted, and the mode in which the arrangements were made and designed to be executed, for carrying them into effect. It will be perceived that it was to be left to the Indians themselves to determine whether they would receive the goods tendered to them. If they expressed their willingness to do so, the payment of their annuities, or any part of them, in that mode was fully authorized by the provision in the 12th

section of the act of June 30th, 1834, organizing the Department of Indian Affairs. If they refused to accept them, there would have been no departure either from that provision or the stipulations in the treaties; the only consequence would have been delay until the Government should be able to make other arrangements for the payment of the balance. It is not known or believed that the instructions upon this point were disregarded.

The merchandise was purchased in New York, of Suydam, Jackson, & Co., upon a contract framed in strict conformity with the terms of the 13th section of the act just referred to. The payments upon the contract were made as follows :

By drafts on banks in New York	-	-	-	\$41,254 94
By drafts on banks in Detroit	-	-	-	53,978 00
By drafts on receivers of the land offices at Ionia and Bronson, Michigan	-	-	-	51,714 00

According to the understanding of the parties to the contract, at the date of its inception, all the payments were to be made in current funds in New York. But when the requisitions for the last two sums were issued, on the 23d of August, the Treasury Department was unable to give warrants on banks at that place; and it proposed, therefore, to give, in lieu thereof, the drafts on Detroit, and the receivers, as above stated.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

C. A. HARRIS,

*Commissioner.*

Hon. J. R. POINSETT,  
*Secretary of War.*

P. S.—A copy of the letter to the acting superintendent of the western superintendency, of June 23d, on the subject of the payment of the annuities to the tribes in his superintendency, is transmitted, as explanatory of the different views entertained in regard to them, founded on the improvement of the largest among them.

C. A. H.