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Appropriation for the Navajo Indians. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, recommending an appropriation for the Navajo Indians in New Mexico

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APPROPRIATION FOR THE NAVAJO INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

RECOMMENDING

An appropriation for the Navajo Indians in New Mexico.

APRIL 5, 1864.—Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., April 5, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication from the Secretary of War, dated the 31st instant, and a copy of a report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, of the 4th instant, upon the subject of providing means of subsistence for the Navajo Indians of New Mexico, upon a reservation at the "Bosque Redondo," on the Pecos river.

Concurring with the Commissioner in the views he expresses on the subject, and also with the War Department in relation to it, I have the honor to recommend that Congress appropriate one hundred thousand dollars to effect the objects contemplated.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. P. USHER,
Secretary of the Interior.

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office of Indian Affairs, April 4, 1864.

SIR: Referring to the letter of the Secretary of War, of the 31st ultimo, relative to the Navajo Indians at the Bosque Redondo, in New Mexico, I have the honor to state, that from information received from various sources in that Territory, as well as from conferences held with General Canby, who has spent many years in that country, and is well acquainted with the habits and customs of said Indians, I learn that they are an agricultural and pastoral people, and that, if properly established at the new agency at Bosque Redondo, they will soon become self-sustaining. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the location

to be able to judge whether or not it is the best that could be found for them, but it is the opinion of the commandant of the military forces in New Mexico that the site is a proper one; and as the Indians are now nearly all held under military duress, at that point, I do not think it best to look further for a new home for them.

In view of these facts, and appreciating the importance of early action in the premises, I have to recommend that an appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars be asked from Congress for the purpose of purchasing agricultural implements, breaking ground, and subsisting said Indians during the next fiscal year, at the end of which time it is hoped that they will be able to maintain themselves by their own labor, said sum being, as I am informed by General Canby, the lowest by which these objects can be accomplished.

The letter of the Secretary of War is returned herewith.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM P. DOLE,
Commissioner.

Hon. J. P. USHER,
Secretary of the Interior.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, March 31, 1864.

SIR: The commander of the department of New Mexico reports that there are now at the Bosque Redondo 4,106 Navajo Indians, with strong probabilities that the remainder of the tribe will soon be collected at that place. General Carleton estimates the entire number of these Indians at 5,000, but it is believed that this is an under-estimate, and that the tribe, when collected, will number at least seven thousand souls.

These Indians have been at war with the people of New Mexico (with short intervals of peace) for nearly two centuries, and if the plan of colonization now commenced can be successfully carried out, it will relieve the treasury from the large expenditures that have been necessary in carrying on military operations against them, and will do much for the settlement and prosperity of New Mexico. It is important for the success of this plan that measures should be taken at once to establish them fully in their new homes, to provide for their wants in their changed condition, and to establish them fully in their determination to abandon their old homes and manner of living.

They are now dependent upon the War Department, but there is no appropriation under the control of the department from which their wants can be supplied, except that the issue of subsistence is justified by necessity, and must be continued until the Interior Department is prepared to assume their control and relieve this department from the burden of maintaining them.

It is important that this should be done as speedily as possible, and in this, and in whatever else that may be necessary to insure the success of this plan, the War Department will give its hearty co-operation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

Hon. J. P. USHER,
Secretary of the Interior.