

4-11-1864

In the senate of the United States. (To accompany bill S. no. 226.) Letter of the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a copy of a communication from the Secretary of War, and a copy of a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 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, and recommending an appropriation to effect the objects contemplated

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

[To accompany bill S. No. 226.]

LETTER

OF

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A copy of a communication from the Secretary of War, and a copy of a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 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, and recommending an appropriation to effect the objects contemplated.

APRIL 11, 1864.—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.*

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN,
President of the Senate.

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 underestimate, and that the tribe, when collected, will number at least 7,000 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.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office 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 the 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 as 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 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.

SANTA FÉ, N. M., *March 13, 1864.*

DEAR SIR: Colonel James L. Collins, former superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico, goes to Washington city by this mail, at the solicitation of General James H. Carleton, now in command in this Territory, in order to place before the Interior and War Departments and the Committee on Indian Affairs the condition of our Indian affairs in New Mexico. The Navajo nation, which has been for years plundering the people of New Mexico, killing and taking into captivity many of our people, finding that their stronghold, the cañon of Chelly, had been entered and taken by our troops, under Colonel Kit Carson, have, unexpectedly to us all, surrendered, and are now in the hands of the military authorities to the extent and number of over five thousand, and they are still coming in. These Indians have expressed a willingness to go to the reservation on the Picos called the Bosque Redondo, to stay there and devote themselves to the pursuits of civilized life. I think that they will do so, and, if provided for and supported for a few years, that these Indians will cease to be a tax on the government, and make as good citizens as the Pueblo Indians of this Territory. These Indians have surrendered a country as large as Ohio, and rich in minerals, and ought to be well and properly fed, clothed, and aided in the business of agriculture for a few years. Immediate action in this matter is by every consideration of justice and policy demanded. These Indians must either be supported, turned loose to kill, murder, and rob, as formerly, or they must starve. Public policy and economy, now that they are in our power and under our control, forbids that they be turned loose again. Humanity forbids that they should be left to starve. If the proper assistance and aid is given these Indians to improve and cultivate their reservation, in a few years they will repay the outlay by ceasing to be savages, and learning to be honest men, living by their own labor, instead of by plundering the property of others. It is ardently hoped that ample provision will be made to accomplish this object. Please be kind enough to aid my friend Colonel Collins in carrying out such policy as you may think the public interest demands.

Yours, &c.,

J. S. WATTS.

Hon. J. R. DOOLITTLE.