

2-10-1865

Annuities of the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, asking Congress to provide for the payment of the annuities to the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior in coin.

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Recommended Citation

H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 58, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1865)

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ANNUITIES OF THE CHIPPEWA INDIANS OF LAKE SUPERIOR.

L E T T E R

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

ASKING

Congress to provide for the payment of the annuities to the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior in coin.

FEBRUARY 10, 1865.—Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 8, 1865.

SIR: I have the honor to submit for the consideration of Congress copies of correspondence relating to the payment in coin of the annuities of the Chippewas of Lake Superior, as required by the treaty with them, and have nothing to add to the reasons given by the agent and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

There can be no doubt of the justice and legality of the claim of the Indians, and I recommend that in this instance, and in all others where the treaty provides for the payment in coin, the appropriation be special, according to the terms of the treaty. Upon a general appropriation the Secretary of the Treasury does not find himself justified in paying coin.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. P. USHER, *Secretary.*

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office Indian Affairs, February 2, 1865.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for your consideration the copy of a letter addressed to this office by Agent L. E. Webb, on the 31st ultimo, urging that the annuities due to the Chippewas of Lake Superior should be paid in coin.

Relative to this matter, it should not be forgotten that subsisting treaties with this tribe expressly stipulate that their annuities shall be paid in specie. Another fact entitled, in my opinion, to grave consideration is that these Indians, located, as they are, upon the border of the British provinces, are constantly subjected to the evil effect of the distinction made in trading operations in favor of British currency and against our own.

2 PAYMENT OF ANNUITIES TO CERTAIN INDIANS IN COIN.

In view of these circumstances, I would respectfully submit whether the necessary steps should not be taken at an early day to obtain the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury to a payment of these annuities in coin, or, failing in that, to lay the matter before Congress, with a recommendation to that body for such mandatory legislation as shall secure the object desired.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. P. DOLE, *Commissioner.*

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

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1865.

SIR: I beg leave again to call your attention to the importance of fulfilling the treaty stipulations with the Chippewas of Lake Superior. The treaties of 1842 and 1854 stipulate that the annuities shall be paid in coin. The payments for the years 1863 and 1864 were made in currency, but the Indians refused to give a receipt in full for their annuities, and demanded coin, and stated that they should make a demand upon the department for the difference in value between the coin and the currency paid them. The Indians gave the notice in writing, which was forwarded by me to you in November last, that hereafter they would not receive currency in payment of their annuities.

In my judgment, their claim is just, and it will be impossible to make the payments this year unless coin is furnished. Many of the Indians live on the borders of the British provinces, and trade extensively with the Hudson Bay Company. They cannot pay out currency except at a discount of 50 per cent. In my judgment, the government can with as much propriety repudiate the payment of the interest on the bonds payable in coin as to refuse to pay the Indians coin when so stipulated in the treaties. This subject demands your prompt action.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. E. WEBB,
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. WM. P. DOLE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.