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Blackfeet Indians. Memorial of the Legislative Assembly of Montana Territory, relative to a proposed treaty with the Blackfeet Indians.

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BLACKFEET INDIANS.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MONTANA TERRITORY,

RELATIVE TO

A proposed treaty with the Blackfeet Indians.

JANUARY 27, 1868.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

*To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States
of America in Congress assembled :*

We, your memorialists, the legislative assembly of the Territory of Montana, do respectfully represent to your honorable body : That all that portion of Montana Territory known as the Blackfeet country has never been treated for by the general government, and consequently the Indian title thereto is not extinguished ; and

Whereas settlements have been made in various parts of said Blackfeet country by an industrious white population, comprising a farming, mining, and mercantile people, who are anxious to have the country in which they reside ceded to the government, in order that their claims may be surveyed, and thereby acquire titles, under the operation of the pre-emption and homestead laws of the United States ; and

Whereas the stipulations of a treaty, concluded in the fall of 1865 by General Thomas F. Meagher, L. E. Munson, and Gad. E. Upson, commissioners on the part of the United States, have been utterly disregarded by the general government, the Blackfeet Indians have accepted the alternative of war ; their choice under the circumstances no one doubts, and but few can blame ; and

Whereas the constant new discoveries of gold deposits in the northern portion of our Territory, on the tributaries of the Missouri river, are attracting general attention, and unless measures are taken in the right direction by the government, the development of the mineral and agricultural wealth of the northern portion of Montana will be seriously retarded, and a general Indian war, with all its horrors, in immediate prospect :

We would therefore most earnestly urge the adoption of the policy heretofore pursued towards the Indians by the government, and that an appropriation be made by Congress for the purpose of carrying into effect a treaty with the said Blackfeet Indians.

And your memorialists do further represent that, in order to save an expense to the government, three commissioners be appointed from citizens of this Territory to act on the part of the United States, for the purpose of carrying into effect said treaty, and that said commissioners shall consist of persons familiar with Indian affairs.

Your memorialists again entreat your prompt attention to the subject, confidently believing that the interests of the general government and the people of Montana will be greatly subserved by an early treaty with said Indians, and your memorialists will ever pray.

Be it resolved by the council and house of representatives of the Territory of Montana, That our delegate in Congress be, and is hereby, requested to use all honorable means to bring this subject to the favorable consideration of Congress,

WELLINGTON STEWART,

Speaker of the House.

CHARLES S. BAGG,

President of the Council.

Approved December 9, 1867.

GREEN CLAY SMITH,

Governor of Montana Territory.

MONTANA TERRITORY, SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

Virginia City, December 27, 1867.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of house joint memorial No. 4, relative to a proposed treaty with the Blackfeet Indians, approved December 9, 1867, now on file in my office.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Territory, at Virginia City, the day and year last above written.

[SEAL.]

JAMES TUFTS,

Secretary of Montana.

Resolved by the legislative assembly of the Territory of Montana, That the proposed surrender of a portion of Eastern Montana for a permanent Indian reservation would be most prejudicial to the interests of the great west, and a staggering blow to the progress of civilization; that the fruitful valley, rich mines, and genial climate of the proposed reservation, while of vast importance to an industrial people, would be valueless to the barbarian, excepting in so far as it would enable him to glut his vengeance upon the pioneers of the border settlements, and arrest the tide of empire in the Territories. We, therefore, earnestly appeal to the government to commit no such wrong against humanity, justice, and the advancement of civilization.

Resolved, That we respectfully appeal to Congress to transfer the Indian bureau to the War Department, and abolish the whole system of Indian agencies, which has been so fruitful of wrong to the Indians and of war upon the whites.

Resolved, That we respectfully represent to the general government that, so far, the military campaigns against the Indians by large bodies of regular troops upon the plains during the recent war with hostile tribes have not been productive of benefits commensurate with the expenditures, and they have but too often resulted in unimportant results, and closed in the fall by treaties not intended to be observed by the Indians, and by furnishing the savages with a supply of arms and ammunition, with which organized by the general government to punish the guilty, and bring them to submission by the only possible way past experience has proven to be successful, vigorous and victorious warfare.

Resolved, That certified copies of these resolutions be furnished by the secretary of this Territory to our delegate in Congress, to the Senate of the United State, to the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, and to the War Department.

WELLINGTON STEWART,
Speaker of the House.
CHARLES S. BAGG,
President of the Council.

Approved December 24, 1867.

GREEN CLAY SMITH,
Governor of Montana Territory.

MONTANA TERRITORY, SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Virginia City, December 27, 1867.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of house joint memorial No. 12, in relation to Indians and the policy of the government regarding the same, approved December 24, 1867, now on file in my office.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Territory, at Virginia City, the day and year last above written.

[SEAL.]

JAMES TUFTS,
Secretary of Montana.