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**Durfee & Peck. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, in relation to the account of Messrs. Durfee & Peck for supplies furnished certain Indians during the winter of 1869.**

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DURFEE & PECK.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN RELATION TO

*The account of Messrs. Durfee & Peck for supplies furnished certain  
Indians during the winter of 1869.*

FEBRUARY 11, 1871.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, D. C., February 8, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter, dated the 7th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and accompanying papers, in relation to the account of Messrs. Durfee & Peck for supplies furnished during the winter of 1869, "to prevent starvation and hostilities on the part of the Crows, Gros Ventres, and Assinaboines of Montana, said account amounting to \$17,920 97."

Agreeably to the recommendation of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the papers in the case are respectfully submitted to Congress for such action in the premises as may be deemed proper, there being no funds within the control of the Department applicable to the payment of the claim.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO.  
*Secretary.*

Hon. JAS. G. BLAINE,  
*Speaker House of Representatives.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., February 7, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to inclose copies of a letter from Messrs. Durfee & Peck of the 4th instant, with accompanying papers, presenting their account for supplies said to have been furnished during the winter of 1869, to prevent starvation and hostilities on the part of the Crows, Gros Ventres, and Assinaboines of Montana, said account amounting in the aggregate to \$17,920 97.

The supplies referred to appear to have been purchased and issued to the Indians under the direction of Hon. James Tufts, late acting governor and ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs for Montana, and

although the records of this office give no specific information on the subject, yet I believe, from the certificates attached to the account, that the goods were actually furnished as stated.

I respectfully suggest that the papers herewith submitted be laid before Congress for such action in the premises as may be deemed proper, there being no funds within the control of the Department that can be used for the payment of the claim.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. S. PARKER,  
*Commissioner.*

Hon. C. DELANO,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 4, 1871.

SIR: We have the honor to submit vouchers, amounting to \$17,920 97, for supplies furnished the Indians in the Montana superintendency during the winter of 1869, and would request payment to Durfee & Peck, present.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

DURFEE & PECK.

UNITED STATES:

Bought of DURFEE and PECK.

1869.		
January.	120 sacks flour, at \$18 50.....	\$2,220 00
	2,780 pounds bacon, at 35 cents.....	973 00
	50 sacks corn, at \$12 50.....	625 00
	6 barrels corned beef, at \$64.....	384 00
	2,290 pounds sugar, at 33 cents.....	755 70
	652 pounds coffee, at 50 cents.....	326 00
	20 barrels hard bread, 885, at 21 cents.....	185 85
	478 pounds rice, at 28 cents.....	133 84
	50 pounds saleratus, at 25 cents.....	12 50
	25 pounds powder, at \$1 75.....	43 75
	100 pounds balls, at 31 cents.....	31 00
	2,000 W. P. caps, at \$3.....	6 00
February.	150 sacks flour, at \$18 50.....	2,775 00
	3,525 pounds bacon, at 35 cents.....	1,233 75
	355 pounds dried meat, at 25 cents.....	88 75
	35 sacks corn, at \$12 50.....	437 50
	2,835 pounds sugar, at 33 cents.....	935 55
	750 pounds coffee, at 50 cents.....	375 00
	10 barrels hard bread, 438, at 21 cents.....	91 98
	25 pounds saleratus, at 25 cents.....	6 25
March.	130 sacks flour, at \$18 50.....	2,405 00
	2,945 pounds bacon, at 35 cents.....	1,030 75
	3 barrels corned beef, at \$64.....	192 00
	2,335 pounds sugar, at 33 cents.....	770 55
	763 pounds coffee, at 50 cents.....	381 50
	50 pounds powder, at \$1 75.....	87 50
	200 pounds balls, at 31 cents.....	62 00
	5,000 W. P. caps, at \$3.....	15 00
April.	50 sacks flour, at \$18 50.....	925 00
	1,175 pounds bacon, at 35 cents.....	411 25
	Total.....	17,920 97

I hereby certify that the above account is correct and just, and that the articles purchased were essentially necessary to prevent starvation among the Crows, Gros Ventres, and Assinaboine Indians, comprised within the Montana superintendency; and that there were no funds in my hands applicable to pay the same.

JAMES TUFTS,  
*Late Governor and Acting Superintendent Indian Affairs, Montana.*

I was cognizant of the large number of Indians gathered about Fort Peck, in Montana Territory, during the winter of 1868-'69, many of whom belonged to my agency, and of their destitute condition. I was also aware of their committing depredations by killing of stock, &c., belonging to the traders, and that Messrs. Durfee & Peck applied to the commanding officer at Fort Buford for military protection, which he could not afford them. I have no doubt but that the furnishing of the above supplies was absolutely necessary to save life and property, and prevent starvation among the Indians.

M. WILKINSON,  
*Late United States Indian Agent.*

From the best evidence I can get upon due investigation, I am satisfied the provisions furnished prevented great suffering and trouble with the Indians, as stated in the above certificate.

J. A. VIALL,  
*Superintendent of Indians, Montana.*

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,  
*Virginia City, Montana, December 5, 1868.*

I have just received your letter of the 23d ultimo, calling my attention to the destitution and suffering of the Indians in your vicinity.

The several tribes to which you refer, I am aware, are needy, and I confess I believe they have suffered much from the neglect of the Government. I regret to inform you, however, that I have no means in my hands to relieve them. I believe the cheapest way to feed them would be to furnish them some ammunition, provided game is abundant, but as their condition makes them troublesome, and complaints would be made should they become hostile, you should be cautious in furnishing them with more than a limited quantity of powder and lead. I think I should feel authorized to relieve them from actual starvation, and if during the winter you should find them in great want, you can supply them with necessary provisions.

I have no doubt the Department will allow anything just and reasonable.

You can render your bill, and I will indorse and recommend it.

Respectfully,

JAMES TUFTS,  
*Acting Governor and ex-officio Superintendent Indian Affairs, Montana Territory.*  
Messrs. DURFEE & PECK, *Fort Peck, Montana.*