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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, relative to an appropriation to aid the Indians in Shasta County, California

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RELIEF OF INDIANS IN SHASTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

RELATIVE TO

An appropriation to aid the Indians in Shasta County, California.

FEBRUARY 25, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 20, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to present herewith a copy of a report, dated the 19th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, submitting to this Department a copy of a communication from citizens of Shasta County, California, addressed to the Hon. J. K. Luttrell, of the House of Representatives, and by him indorsed, representing that the Pitt River, Fall River, and Hot Creek tribes of Indians, of California, are in a starving condition, and requesting that immediate action be taken to supply the wants of the Indians, and thus avert the danger to settlers which, under existing circumstances, they naturally apprehend.

To relieve the settlers from the burden of supporting the Indians referred to, the Commissioner has prepared an estimate, herewith inclosed, of appropriation for the sum of \$2,000, or so much thereof as may be required to provide for the most urgent necessities of said tribes, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

I commend the subject to the favorable consideration of Congress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., February 19, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the inclosed copy of a communication from citizens of Shasta County, California, addressed to Hon. J. K. Luttrell, and by him referred to this office.

The petitioners in this case represent that there are in that section of the country some five or six hundred Indians belonging to the Pitt River, Fall River, and Hot Creek tribes, in a destitute and starving condition, caused, to some extent, by the drouth of the past season, by which their scanty means of subsistence, such as roots, currants, plums, &c., were entirely destroyed.

To provide for the immediate and most urgent necessities of these Indians, and relieve the neighboring settlers from the burden of their support, the petitioners ask, and Mr. Luttrell indorses the request, that a special appropriation be made by Congress.

With this object in view, I have caused to be prepared, and inclose herewith, an estimate for the sum of \$2,000, or so much thereof as may be required for the purpose indicated, and respectfully submit the same for the favorable consideration of the Department and of Congress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW'D P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

FALL RIVER MILLS, SHASTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,
January, 1874.

Hon. J. K. LUTTRELL,
Member of Congress :

In this immediate section of the country there are from five to six hundred Indians, Pitt River, Fall River, and Hot Creek tribes. They subsist on game, fish, roots, currants, and plums, the three latter being their only substitute for flour. In ordinary years these Indians have not suffered, but at this time they are in a truly pitiful condition.

In the past season drought and grasshoppers have destroyed roots, currants, and plums, and, as a consequence, the poor creatures have nothing to live upon but fish, which they have dried for their winter store. You know, of course, they cannot subsist without vegetable food, and their pleadings for flour with which to supply their starving numbers are universal and unceasing. About one hundred of the buck Indians, through the summer season, were employed by the settlers; but now there is no work for them, and all out of employment. In the memory of settlers for fourteen years back there has been no other season which has suffered so much from drought and grasshoppers, and the Indians were therefore unprepared for the calamity. What trouble this destitution may lead to none can tell. We do not wish to augur disaster to the whites; we expect aid through your influence, and that speedily, for those poor, starving creatures. These tribes are far superior in size, character, and habits to many tribes in other portions of our State, and drunkenness is unknown among them; yet they have never received any aid from Government. This has been, and is yet to a certain extent, one of the best Indian countries in the State.

The poor, ignorant creatures say, "the store-keepers and millers are disbursing agents of the Government, or 'General Grandy,' as they call the President, and that they are wrongfully withholding from them the supplies for their urgent wants."

The settlers have done all they are able, as they themselves are poor and have their families to support. The failure of our crops this last season along Pitt River has been very hard on the settlers.

Imagine, then, what is an actual fact. An army of starving savages, by instinct peaceably disposed, but by want driven to desperation, and knowing no law, and you then have the present hazardous position in which our settlers are placed. For the sake of humanity, and for the protection of your constituents, we beg that you will lose no time in calling upon the proper authorities, requesting them to appoint a relief committee in this valley. There are a number of good citizens in this valley trustworthy to fill the commission with honor. Better is it our Government spend a few thousand dollars for the sake of humanity than to let the condition of things run to a dangerous point.

We have observed by the annexed clipping that you have made provision for the Big Valley and Hot Spring Indians, of Siskiyou County, so we rely with confidence that you will attend to this without delay, and your petitioners will ever pray.

Names of settlers.

Peter Eiler, <i>P. M.</i>	M. P. Maxwell.
Nathan Pritchard.	M. Goodman.
David Eiler.	Wm. J. Bray.
W. Hobson.	Jno. Hurlbert.
John T. Frulan.	Wm. H. Winter.
F. Rochme.	A. J. Grunell.
Frederick Florin.	Abram Selvester.
J. F. Gros.	Wm. H. Himes.
D. Murcken.	C. H. Manning.
Jacob Smith Kenturt.	A. C. Hill.
Marvin P. Barnum.	E. G. Slicer.
Abram Fender.	A. Hinkson.
L. K. Hinkson.	C. Parker.
E. G. Miller.	B. W. Curtis.
F. Knoch.	D. A. McCoy.
Daniel Haney.	Joshua Selvester.
Geo. Buckner.	Thos. J. Pilkington.
Jas. Estep.	H. H. McAlpin.
J. E. Mooses, <i>P. M.</i>	G. M. Rock.
John M. Clayton.	W. J. Everett.
Geo. Gross.	A. J. Cook.
J. W. Rock.	J. F. Bowman.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL,
January 26, 1874.

Hon. J. K. LUTTRELL :

We commend this to your earnest notice as being a petition worthy of respectful consideration.

WM. P. DANGERFIELD.
FRANCIS G. BURKE.

SAN FRANCISCO, January 27, 1874.

SIR: I inclose to you a petition of many settlers in Shasta County, respecting the suffering of the Indians in that section of country.

Doubtless many of the signers are men with whom you are acquainted.

The petition was sent to me by Mr. A. J. Cook, of Fall River Mills, with a letter accompanying, inclosed herewith. Please communicate with Mr. Cook, direct, in relation to the matter. It certainly seems an urgent case.

With great respect, I am your obedient servant,

FRANCIS G. BURKE.

Hon. J. K. LUTTRELL,

Member of Congress, Washington, D. C.

FALL RIVER MILLS, SHASTA COUNTY,

January 18, 1874.

Friend BURKE :

DEAR SIR : Inclosed please find a petition from the settlers of this valley, which you will please get indorsed by some good citizen of San Francisco, and forward to J. K. Luttrell, of San Francisco, Washington, D. C., as soon as possible, and oblige,

Yours, &c.,

A. J. COOK.

N. B.—We could have gotten many more signers on the petition, but the weather has been very rough since I have been home, snowing and blowing all the time. This will be a very hard winter in the upper country on sheep and cattle, as well as on Indians. One sheep man, over in Big Valley, has lost up to this time from his flock over nine hundred head.

Yours, &c.,

A. J. C.

[Indorsement.]

I am well acquainted with many of the petitioners named herein, and know them to be reliable, and would urge that some provision be made to ration the Indians.

A few hundred dollars' worth of flour or beef would go far toward relieving their present wants.

J. K. LUTTRELL.

Estimate of appropriation required for the relief of certain Indians of Shasta County, California.

For this amount, or so much thereof as may be required, to provide for the most urgent necessities of the Pitt River, Fall River, and Hot Creek Indians, residing in Shasta County, California, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior \$2,000 00