

University of Oklahoma College of Law

University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons

American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899

3-4-1874

Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a draught of a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to use funds from the sale of lands for the benefit of the Osage Indians

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indigenous, Indian, and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 169, 43d Cong., 1st Sess. (1874)

This House Executive Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu.

OSAGE INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A draught of a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to use funds from the sale of lands for the benefit of the Osage Indians.

MARCH 4, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 27, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to present herewith a copy of a communication, dated the 25th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with a copy of a letter from a member of the "Committee of Friends," directing attention to the necessity that exists for rendering available, for the purpose of their civilization, the ample accruing funds of the Great and Little Osage Indians.

Concurring in the recommendation that Congress be requested to authorize an annual expenditure of \$200,000 for four years from the proceeds of the sales of the lands of the Great and Little Osage Indians in Kansas, or of so much of said proceeds as under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior shall be deemed necessary for the support and civilization of said Indians, I submit herewith a draught of a bill for the purpose, to which the attention of Congress is respectfully invited.

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 25, 1874.

SIR: Herewith I have the honor to inclose copies of a letter from William Nicholson, of the committee of Friends on Indian affairs, dated the 6th instant, in which the attention of the Department is invited to the necessity for some arrangement being made "by which the

ample accruing funds of the Great and Little Osage Indians may be made available for their civilization."

By the 12th section of the Indian appropriation act of July 15, 1870, (Stat., vol. 16, p. 362,) it is provided that the United States, in consideration of the relinquishment by the Osage Indians of their lands in Kansas, as stipulated in the 2d article of the treaty with said Indians of September 29, 1865, (Stat., vol. 14, p. 688,) shall pay annually interest on the amount of money received as proceeds of sale of said lands, at the rate of five per centum, to be expended for the benefit of the tribe.

The greater portion of these proceeds up to the present time having, as Mr. Nicholson states in his letter, been expended in the purchase of and removal to their new reservation in the Indian Territory, and in their settlement thereat, the interest, as it accrues, is insufficient to provide for the necessities of the tribe and to carry on the important work of their civilization and improvement.

It is, therefore, recommended—and the Office sustains the recommendation—that Congress be asked to authorize an annual expenditure for four years of \$200,000 from the proceeds of the sales above referred to, or so much thereof as under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior shall be deemed necessary for the support and civilization of said Indians.

A draught for a bill with the above object in view is herewith respectfully submitted.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWD. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 6, 1874.*

It is my duty to call thy attention to the necessity for some arrangement by which the ample accruing funds of the Great and Little Osage Indians may be made available for their civilization.

The act of Congress of July, 1870, provides that the interest of the proceeds of the sales of their lands in Kansas may be used for their benefit in such manner as the President shall deem best. Nearly the whole of these proceeds to the present time have been required for the purchase of their new reservation, and for their removal and settlement. The simple provision of interest, therefore, is not for the present sufficient to supply them with the necessary means of civilization.

These Indians number 3,500, and are located in four principal settlements, each of which is in charge of a farmer, who, (with his assistants) resides at a station most central and convenient to the Indians under his special care. At each of these stations are kept oxen, plows, wagons, and other farming implements for general use in that division. The agency is centrally located as to these four stations, each of which is visited by the agent as often as practicable.

These Indians have mainly lived heretofore by the chase, but are now manifesting a most remarkable disposition to a settled life. When they were about to leave for the plains last spring for their usual hunt, the agent offered to such of them as were willing to adopt a different mode of life \$2.50 per hundred for rails split and laid into a solid staked and ridged fence, and also to have the land thus inclosed broken for them to plant. Fifty-eight heads of families at once went to work, making

and putting into fence 81,000 rails, and providing for each of these families a spot of ground which they could call home. Many others, upon their return from the hunt, selected locations, and desired land broken for them, which was done to the extent of the means at the agent's command. About 1,100 acres were broken last year, in lots varying from one acre to eighty, and their farm products greatly exceeded those of any previous year in their whole history. A young half-breed Osage is studying medicine, and renders good service as assistant and interpreter to the physician. Two workmen in the blacksmith-shop, the wheelwright and the gunsmith, are all Osages. All the laborers at the saw-mill, except the engineer and sawyer, are blanket Osages. The principle of this mode of managing indians is exceedingly important. Instead of distributing the funds of the tribe per capita, and thus promoting dependence and thriftlessness on the part of the Indian, and inciting schemes of swindling on the part of white men, each individual Indian becomes the actual owner of the funds of his tribe in the exact proportion of his industry. The ratio of distribution is changed from a numerical to an industrial basis, and besides; each Indian receives the actual productive results of his own industry; and the principle upon which he comes into possession both of the money of the tribe, and of the results of the labor which that money purchases, is that of earning it by his own hard work. That which is earned in this way is seldom wasted. It is valued somewhat in proportion to its cost, and the desire of individual ownership and possession thus stimulated becomes a safeguard against the disposition to waste and misuse which too often converts the system of money payments into a blighting inheritance.

Agent Gibson, in charge of these Indians, writes me, under date of 27th ultimo, that during that month (January) ten families of blanket Osages have gone into good houses, which they have assisted in building, and that they are asking for chairs, tables, wash-tubs, wash-boards, smoothing-irons, &c. He opened the Manual Labor Boarding School on New Year's day, although the building is not completed, and there are over thirty pupils, three of whom work in the shoe-shop half of the day, one in the carpenter-shop, and one in the blacksmith shop. Others do the heavy work in and about the kitchen and wash-room, haul wood, &c. The girls are also engaged in the household and kitchen departments. The children seem happy, and manifest no disposition to run away from the school. When the blanket Osages come in from the plains, the present accommodations will not suffice for half the children that have been promised. He furthermore states that he has heard of no depredations committed on the plains by Osages during the preceding summer or the present winter. This could never have been said of them during any similar period in the past.

It seems to me of the utmost importance to encourage the newly-awakened disposition of these Indians toward civilization by a judicious expenditure of their own funds, and I earnestly recommend that application be made to Congress to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to expend annually for four years, for civilizing and beneficial purposes among them, the sum of \$200,000 of the proceeds of their late reservation, or so much thereof as he may deem necessary.

Very truly, &c.,

WM. NICHOLSON,
*General Agent of Associated Executive
 Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs.*

Hon. E. P. SMITH,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to expend from the proceeds arising from the sale of lands of the Great and Little Osage Indians in the State of Kansas, as referred to in the twelfth section of the Indian appropriation act, approved July fifteen, eighteen hundred and seventy, the sum of two hundred thousand dollars per annum for four years from the passage of this act, for the support and civilization of said Indians, or so much thereof as he may deem necessary for such purposes.

○