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Message from the President of the United States, transmitting a report from the Secretary of the Interior containing an agreement signed by the chiefs and headmen of the Ute Indians

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MESSAGE
FROM THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A communication from the Secretary of the Interior relative to an agreement made with the chiefs of the Ute Indians.

MAY 26, 1880.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I have the honor to transmit herewith a communication from the Secretary of the Interior with reference to the agreement made with the chiefs of the Ute Indians, recently in Washington, a copy of which was submitted to Congress on the 9th of March last.

The special and immediate attention of Congress to the imminent danger attending the postponement of appropriate legislation to carry into effect the stipulations of this agreement is urgently solicited.

R. B. HAYES.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
May 25, 1880.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, May 25, 1880.

SIR: I have the honor to submit to you herewith a communication received from Charles Adams, esq., late special agent of this department, with regard to the present condition of things on the Ute Reservation in Colorado. I beg leave to invite your attention to the unsettled and dangerous state of affairs there, and also to the fact that the agreement arrived at between the Ute chiefs recently in Washington and myself, which was submitted to Congress for its action on the 9th of March, and prompt ratification of which, by appropriate legislation, would in all probability have obviated existing difficulties there, is after the lapse of many weeks still unacted upon by the House of Representatives. Collisions between persons who, without authority, are invading the territory of the Ute Reservation in Colorado and the Ute Indians are evidently threatening; and it is to be feared that if hostilities now occur, even that part of the Ute tribe which is most friendly to the government may be involved in them, under the impression that having made an agreement with them, and leaving it unacted upon, we have

been acting in bad faith, merely desiring to deprive them of their lands without consideration.

Speedy action upon the agreement in question seems, therefore, of the highest importance, and I beg leave to suggest that you commend once more this subject to the immediate attention of Congress.

Very respectfully,

C. SCHURZ, *Secretary.*

The PRESIDENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 18, 1880.

DEAR SIR: I deem it my duty before leaving the United States for my post in South America, to submit to you that I have received direct information from the Ute Indians, that in consequence of the non-ratification by Congress of the agreement they made with you at Washington last winter, they begin to believe that in some manner the government does not intend to act in good faith toward them, and that they expect to be dispossessed of their reservation without remuneration.

That the United States troops now *en route* to the reservation, sent there to keep out intruders, will be able to accomplish their object they will never believe; and if they did their faith would not be consistent with their judgment nor previous attempts of troops to do the same thing. The people of the State of Colorado, and thousands of adventurers and immigrants from other States, have made up their minds to explore, overrun, and possess these lands, and all the troops now in Colorado cannot keep them out, as it would be simply impossible to guard all the mountain passes. The Indians themselves consider that they have virtually given up their lands, and in case they derive no benefit thereby it will be only a question for them whether to accept the inevitable peaceably or retaliate by the only mode known to them—war in the most cruel and barbarous manner. They do not understand why a solemn agreement urged upon them and entered into with them by one branch of the government may be rejected by another branch, but much less do they understand why a matter which seemed so urgent and was considered as preventing a war two months ago has not been acted upon, and this delay and uncertainty suggests to their minds the idea that the government is using this delay to allow its soldiers and all others who wish to gain a firm foothold on the reservation, and then declare the agreement not approved, but hold the lands; and while still their chief Ouray and their agent can and do control them, a very few days may change the present status of affairs.

Prospectors, miners, and others are now on the reservation in great numbers; every day this number is increased; every day I fear to hear of some collision, and every day brings us nearer to this inevitable catastrophe which is sure to come unless prompt action is taken.

If in submitting this to you for such action as you may deem proper, I should inadvertently have overstepped the limits of modesty, I beg you to take into consideration that my name is signed to this proposed agreement, that through me the Indians entered upon these negotiations, and that to me they look that the same be carried out in good faith.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES ADAMS.