

2-14-1883

Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a copy of report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, calling attention to the necessity of an immediate appropriation to enable the fulfillment of article 10 of the Treaty of April 29, 1868 (15 Stat., 635), with the Sioux Indians

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Recommended Citation

S. Exec. Doc. No. 68, 47th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1883)

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A copy of report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, calling attention to the necessity of an immediate appropriation to enable the fulfillment of article 10 of the treaty of April 29, 1868 (15 Stat., 635), with the Sioux Indians.

FEBRUARY 14, 1883.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, February 13, 1883.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of report by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the 8th instant, calling attention to the provision of article 10, of the treaty of April 29, 1868 (15 Stat., 635), with the Sioux Indians, which provides—

That the United States will furnish and deliver to each lodge of Indians, or family of persons legally incorporated with them, who shall remove to the reservation herein described and commence farming, one good American cow, and one good, well-broken pair of American oxen within sixty days after such lodge or family shall have so settled upon the reservation.

The report shows that there are at the several Sioux agencies a total of 2,680 families engaged in agriculture; that these are entitled to 2,680 yoke of oxen and 2,680 cows, which are estimated to cost about \$348,400.

I consider it essential to the successful prosecution of the work of civilizing the Indians that the government keep its engagements with them both in letter and spirit.

The department is liable at any time to be called upon for cows and oxen by such of the Indians as have settled on farms; it is impossible to respond to such demands. The agents have exerted themselves to induce the Indians to select farms, build houses, and become farmers, believing that when the Indians were entitled to cows and oxen under the provisions of the treaty they would be provided. If we fail to comply with the conditions on our part we can hardly hope that the Indians will respect theirs.

If these Indians can be induced to settle on farms, accept, and care for stock, and cultivate the ground even to a limited extent, we may reasonably hope that the time is not far distant when they will be able to support themselves without government aid. But, independent of this consideration, it is the duty of the government to keep its engagement with these Indians. This provision was not inserted in the treaty without valuable consideration to the government, in the great amount of land ceded to the government by the Indians under this treaty. The government has the land and ought not now to hesitate about paying according to the contract.

I cannot urge too strongly on you the advantage of enabling the department to fulfill all treaty obligations to the letter.

If Congress is not disposed to carry out any treaty heretofore made, it should so declare, and not attempt to defeat such treaty by withholding from the department the means of its execution. But it cannot be that any considerable number of either branch of the National Legislature can object to the provision I have quoted, for it is apparent that these people will not cease to be a burden on the government until we induce them to become laborers in the only field open to them, that is, that of stock growers, and agriculturists.

I submit an estimate for an appropriation in the sum above stated and respectfully recommend that it be included as an item in the sundry civil appropriation bill to enable this department to carry out the treaty stipulations with these Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. M. TELLER,
Secretary.

The PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
of the United States Senate.

For this amount or so much thereof as may be required to enable the Secretary of the Interior to carry out the stipulation contained in the tenth article of the treaty with the Sioux Indians of April 29, 1868 (15 Stat., 635), for the purchase of oxen and cows, to be furnished and delivered, as required by said treaty, to each lodge of Indians or family of persons legally incorporated with them, who are engaged in farming upon the reservation, \$348,400.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, February 8, 1883.

SIR: I have the honor to call your attention to article 10 of the treaty with the Sioux Indians of April 29, 1868, which provides:

And it is further stipulated that the United States will furnish and deliver to each lodge of Indians, or family of persons legally incorporated with them, who shall remove to the reservation herein described and commence farming, one good American cow and one good, well-broken pair of American oxen within sixty days after such lodge or family shall have so settled upon said reservation.

I find on a careful examination of the best sources of information at my command that there are Indian families now "engaged in agriculture" as follows: Standing Rock, 767; Pine Ridge, 600; Rosebud, 450; Cheyenne River, 361; Crow Creek, 280; Lower Brulé, 125; Santee, 97; or a total of 2,680 families.

These by the terms of the above-mentioned treaty would be entitled to 2,680 yoke of oxen and 2,680 cows, at an estimated cost of \$100 for each yoke of oxen, and \$30 for each cow, making the amount necessary for the purchase of the oxen and cows to discharge the obligation of the government as provided for by the tenth article of the treaty referred to above, \$348,400. I therefore respectfully recommend that Congress be asked to place upon the sundry civil appropriation bill an item of \$348,400, to be used by the Secretary of the Interior in furnishing the oxen and cows required by treaty stipulations, or so much thereof as he may find on careful investigation to be due to Indians who have actually complied in good faith with the conditions of said treaty.

Very respectfully,

H. PRICE,
Commissioner.

Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.