

7-7-1884

Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, in response to Senate resolution of July 2, 1884, reports relative to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians on the Tongue and Rosebud Rivers.

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Recommended Citation

S. Exec. Doc. No. 208, 48th Cong., 1st Sess. (1884)

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

In response to Senate resolution of July 2, 1884, reports relative to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians on the Tongue and Rosebud Rivers.

JULY 7, 1884.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, July 7, 1884.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the Senate resolution of the 2d instant, in the following words, viz:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be directed to report to the Senate the facts relative to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians on the Tongue and Rosebud Rivers, who are alleged to be without rations and committing depredations upon settlers for subsistence.

The resolution having been referred to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I have the honor to inclose in reply thereto a copy of his report on the subject of the 5th instant.

An inspector of this Department was instructed by telegraph on the 5th instant to go to the locality and investigate and report upon the condition of the Indians and their alleged depredations.

Very respectfully,

M. L. JOSLYN,
Acting Secretary.

The PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, July 5, 1884.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by reference from the Department under date of the 3d instant, of Senate resolution

That the Secretary of the Interior be directed to report to the Senate the facts relative to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians on the Tongue and Rosebud Rivers, who are alleged to be without rations, and committing depredations upon settlers for subsistence.

In compliance with this resolution I respectfully state that some time during the year 1883, in consequence of representations having been made to this office that a number of Northern Cheyennes had located in the Tongue River Valley and vicinity, and allegations having been made by cattlemen that they were killing stock and otherwise molesting them, Special Agent Milburn was instructed to visit the locality and ascertain the conditions and wants of these Indians, and the truth of the complaints made against them. From his report it appeared

that the complaints of the cattlemen were not well founded, and that while some of the Indians had made little or no progress, others were doing well and ought to be encouraged in their efforts to take homesteads and become self-supporting. The military authorities at Fort Keogh also reported that these Indians were deserving of assistance and should be allowed to remain. In view of these circumstances I recommended last fall that a special agent be appointed to take charge of these Indians, and in August, 1883, Special Agent Dyer was appointed for that purpose and retained in service until April 15, 1884, when it became necessary to dispense with his services, as the funds at the disposal of this office which could be used for payment of his services were exhausted. At my request the War Department detailed an officer to take charge of these Indians, and Capt. E. P. Ewers, U. S. A., is now in charge.

Last fall it became evident that during the winter some assistance must be given these Indians to prevent depredation or starvation. No funds had been furnished by Congress for these Indians; the amount appropriated by Congress under treaty with the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes was required for these Indians at their Agency in Wyoming, and could not, under the treaty, be diverted to feed those in Montana. Under section IV of the act of March 1, 1883, a small amount not required for subsistence was diverted, and these Indians were furnished with 50,000 pounds of flour, 5,500 pounds of bacon, and \$3,000 worth beef, which was the means of keeping them from starvation during the winter. These supplies became exhausted early in the spring and, no additional funds being at the disposal of this office, no food has been furnished them since. Congress was requested, in making appropriations for the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, for the fiscal year 1885, to insert a clause providing that the amount appropriated shall be divided between those in Wyoming and on the Tongue River, and this has been done; but I regret to say, that at the same time the amount appropriated was reduced from \$53,000 in 1884 to \$46,000 in 1885, and in making the reduction the amount given for the purchase of food was reduced from \$35,000 to \$25,000, although the first named amount was required, and the amount for employes was increased from \$6,000 to \$9,000, although it was not necessary nor asked for by this office.

In making the division between the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in Wyoming and those on the Tongue River, the sum of \$23,125 will be available for the first named, and the sum of \$13,875 for the latter, exclusive of the amount appropriated for employes, and as the sum of \$47,000 appropriated for 1884 for food and clothing was hardly sufficient for those in Wyoming alone, I have no doubt that when the sum of \$37,000 appropriated for 1885 for food and clothing is divided between those in Wyoming and on the Tongue River, neither of these bands will have sufficient to prevent starvation or depredation, and I earnestly hope and recommend that an additional appropriation of at least \$20,000 be made for these Indians.

It may be proper to add that so far this office has no official information of any depredations being committed by the Indians near Tongue River.

Very respectfully,

H. PRICE,
Commissioner.

Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.