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Northern Cheyenne Indians. Message from the President of the United States, transmitting a communication from the Secretary of the Interior, inclosing a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in relation to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians

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NORTHERN CHEYENNE INDIANS.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, inclosing a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in relation to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians.

DECEMBER 15, 1885.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I transmit herewith a communication of 10th instant from the Secretary of the Interior, inclosing a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs upon the subject of the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians upon the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers, in Montana, the inadequacy of the appropriation made for their support during the current fiscal year, and requesting legislative authority for the use of certain funds, indicated, for their relief.

The proposed legislation does not involve any additional appropriation, and the necessity for the authority requested is urgent. I therefore recommend the matter to the early and favorable consideration and action of Congress.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
December 14, 1885.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 10, 1885.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith a report of the 9th instant from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as to the condition of the Northern Cheyenne Indians on the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers, in Montana, and the inadequacy of the appropriation made for their support, with recommendation for action by Congress to enable this Department to procure such supplies for them as will relieve their suffering and prevent death from starvation and exposure.

The proposed legislation does not call for any additional appropria-

tion over the amount appropriated for the Indian service for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1886, but is designed to invest the Department with authority to apply, for the relief of these Indians, a portion of the funds already appropriated to meet certain cases of distress among the Indian tribes.

This case is one of great urgency, and prompt action by Congress cannot be too strongly recommended.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. Q. C. LAMAR,

Secretary.

The PRESIDENT.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, December 9, 1885.

SIR: I have the honor to state that information has been received from the governor of Montana Territory and other sources that the Northern Cheyenne Indians, on the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers, in Montana, are suffering for food, clothing, &c., and it is also understood that an inspector, who was ordered to proceed to the locality and investigate and report as to the condition and needs of those Indians, has just returned from that duty, and reports that the Indians are in a deplorable condition, many of them almost naked, with the rigor of winter upon them, and all of them suffering for want of food.

He reports that there are about seven hundred of them in the localities named, and they are without tools with which to procure fuel, cut timber for building houses, &c., except such as they can borrow from some of the settlers and others in the vicinity.

Prior to 1884 these Indians were located at the Pine Ridge Agency, Dakota, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, Indian Territory, and were provided for out of the appropriation made for Indians on those agencies; but Congress, in the Indian appropriation bill of March 1, 1883, Revised Statutes, 22, page 445, provided for the removal of those in the Indian Territory to some other locality, and they were removed to the Pine Ridge Agency. Since that time they have gradually drifted to the country where they now are, and to which they are greatly attached.

For the fiscal year 1886 Congress provided that the funds appropriated for fulfilling treaty with the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes "shall be expended pro rata, as near as may be, for the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in Wyoming and on the Tongue River, in Montana."

The Northern Cheyennes in Wyoming heretofore have received the full benefit of the whole of their treaty funds. This pro rata division for the current year, which gave three-eighths of the funds to the Indians on and in vicinity of Tongue River, so reduced the appropriation applicable for support of those in Wyoming that it has been found necessary to make a diversion of funds from another appropriation, under the provision of law providing therefor, to prevent suffering among those Indians.

There were five hundred and seventy-five of these Indians on and in the vicinity of Tongue River at the time the pro rata division was made, and the sum set apart for their support as required by the law was \$13,875, which was not sufficient to meet the wants of those Indians,

who were absolutely destitute. The number has subsequently increased to over seven hundred by further accessions of Northern Cheyennes from Pine Ridge (Sioux) Agency, so that the funds available are totally inadequate to prevent suffering, to say nothing of supplying tools, implements, &c., to aid them in beginning work.

The Indian appropriation act of March 3, 1885, contains the following provisions:

To supply food and other necessities of life in cases of distress among the Indians not having treaty funds, arising from emergencies not foreseen or otherwise provided for, to be used at the discretion of the President, \$50,000; and a report of all expenditures under this provision shall be made to Congress at its next session thereafter.

Under the terms of this appropriation, of which a sufficient balance remains unexpended, no portion thereof can lawfully be used for the Northern Cheyenne Indians, because they have treaty funds, though totally inadequate for their proper support, &c.

In order to meet the pressing emergency and to avoid distress, suffering, and death among these Indians from starvation and exposure to the winter weather, I respectfully recommend that Congress be asked to authorize, by resolution, the use from the appropriation above mentioned the sum of \$12,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary to provide additional food and clothing, and to purchase necessary fuel, implements, and supplies for the Northern Cheyennes on and in the vicinity of the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers, in Montana.

The act making appropriations for the Indian service for the fiscal year 1886 provides for the appointment of an agent to take charge of these Indians, and there are sufficient funds at the disposal of this office for the erection of an agent's house and such other buildings as may be required, from the appropriation of buildings at agencies and repairs.

Very respectfully,

J. D. C. ATKINS,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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