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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,  
transmitting a copy of a communication from the  
Commissioner of Indian Affairs explaining the  
importance of a chief clerk being provided for the  
Office of Indian Affairs

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## LETTER

FROM

# THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

*A copy of a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs explaining the importance of a chief clerk being provided for the Office of Indian Affairs.*

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APRIL 13, 1892.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, April 12, 1892.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated 9th instant, explaining the importance of a chief clerk being provided for the Office of Indian Affairs.

In the estimates for appropriations now before Congress for consideration said position is asked for. There is no doubt in my mind that the volume and character of the business transacted in the Office of Indian Affairs entitle that Bureau to a chief clerk, and I urge favorable consideration of the request for the creation of the office.

Very respectfully,

JOHN W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary.*

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., April 9, 1892.*

SIR: I deem it important that attention again be called to the need of a chief clerk for the Indian Bureau.

Up to 1887 Congress provided for this office a Commissioner and chief clerk. During the five years preceding, an annual appeal was made to Congress to allow the office an assistant commissioner, whose services were sorely needed for the prompt and efficient dispatch of a business which was rapidly increasing, both in the amount of work to be done and the variety of subjects coming up for consideration.

By the act of March 3, 1887 (24 Stat., 623), an assistant commissioner was provided for at \$3,000 per annum, but it was coupled with the provision that he "shall also perform the duties of chief clerk," and no

provision was then, or has since, been made for a chief clerk for this Bureau.

This afforded a measure of relief, especially in that it provided an officer to act in charge of the Bureau in the absence of the Commissioner, and for signing letters relating to routine matters, but it imposed upon him the routine details of the duties of the office of chief clerk, which consumes much of his time, to the embarrassment of the more important questions which press for consideration and burden the Indian Office.

The reduction of reservations, allotments to Indians, building of railroads over Indian lands, extension of the Indian school system, trying to adjust and define the legal rights of Indians, etc., are matters which bring to this office an endless variety of questions, requiring wise and prompt action. As Indians and whites come into closer relations with each other the multiplied points of contact correspondingly increase the opportunities for complication and the need for adjustment; and as the Indian merges into the citizen he must have individual hearing, treatment, training, and supervision, which were not required so long as the Indians were dealt with as tribes, the chiefs and headmen controlling and regulating the members of their respective tribes and bands.

The work devolving upon the Bureau is too heavy for the time and strength of a Commissioner and an assistant commissioner, with the duties of chief clerk imposed upon the latter, as prescribed by existing law; and it is, therefore, impossible to give to important subjects the careful and prompt consideration which their weight and urgency demand, and the efficiency of the administration of the Bureau is, consequently, seriously impaired.

The need of the kind of relief which this Bureau seeks has been recognized so far as the Land, Patent, and Pension offices are concerned, which have chief clerks as well as assistant commissioners, the Pension Office having two deputy commissioners and a chief clerk and assistant chief clerk.

I respectfully renew the request that a chief clerk be allowed this Bureau. Under such an arrangement the assistant commissioner can be considerably relieved of mere office routine and minor details, and be able to devote the time thus secured to the more intricate and important matters pertaining to the administration of the Indian service.

I have already submitted estimates in accordance with the above, which have been approved by you and presented to Congress; but I suggest that the attention of Congress be specially called to the matter, lest it be overlooked or its importance be underrated.

Very respectfully,

T. J. MORGAN,  
*Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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