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Appropriations, Indian service -- Fort Berthold Agency. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior recommending an appropriation to pay outstanding indebtedness on account of the Indian service at Fort Berthold Indian Agency

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APPROPRIATIONS, INDIAN SERVICE—FORT BERTHOLD
AGENCY.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

RECOMMENDING

An appropriation to pay outstanding indebtedness on account of the Indian service at Fort Berthold Indian agency.

FEBRUARY 18, 1870.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 16, 1870.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication of the 9th instant from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, reporting the sum of \$63,203 05 due for services rendered and supplies furnished for and on account of the Indian service at the Fort Berthold agency, Dakota Territory.

The letter of the Commissioner explains the nature of the indebtedness, and is accompanied by copies of papers and list of the vouchers remaining unpaid.

The attention of Congress is respectfully invited to the subject, with the recommendation that an appropriation of \$63,203 05 be made to pay the outstanding indebtedness.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. D. COX,
Secretary.

Hon. JAMES G. BLAINE,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., February 9, 1870.

SIR: I have the honor to state that vouchers have been presented to and are now in this office, to the amount of \$63,203 05, certified by late Agent Wilkinson, in favor of various persons, for services rendered and supplies furnished for and on account of the Indian service at the Fort Berthold agency, Dakota Territory.

These vouchers, with two exceptions, are for services rendered and supplies furnished prior to the 1st of July, 1869. Others of a like character, issued by the late agent subsequently to that date, have been presented to this office and paid out of the present year's appropriation for the Indians of said agency. In paying those last referred to, said appropriation was reduced to such an extent that there is at present only a sufficient amount of money on hand to carry on the agency to the end of the current fiscal year; and it is therefore impossible for this office to pay any portion of the unpaid vouchers.

Many of these vouchers are for services rendered as employés at said agency. They have been examined and approved by the honorable John A. Burbank, governor, and ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs for Dakota, and payment thereof has been recommended by him. I have no doubt that the services were actually rendered as stated; and from the statement of the late agent, and the best information upon the subject that this office can obtain, I am also satisfied that the supplies named in the other vouchers were furnished in good faith, and that they were necessary for the good of the service.

I herewith inclose a list of the unpaid vouchers issued by late Agent Wilkinson, showing the names of the persons who rendered services and furnished supplies, and on what amount each voucher was issued, and the amount thereof, together with copies of certain papers relative to the matter, and respectfully recommend that the same be submitted to Congress for its action, and with the view of having the necessary funds appropriated to pay off this outstanding indebtedness.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. S. PARKER,
Commissioner.

Hon. J. D. Cox,
Secretary of the Interior.

List of vouchers certified by late Agent Wilkinson, on account of the Indian service at the Fort Berthold agency, remaining unpaid.

| Names of claimants. | Articles. | Amount. |
|-----------------------|--|------------|
| Durfee & Peck..... | Flour, bacon, &c., furnished the Assinaboines during the winter of 1868 and 1869..... | \$3,742 00 |
| Durfee & Peck..... | Flour, meats, powder, shot, cloth, &c., for the Assinaboines, during July and August, 1868..... | 13,128 25 |
| Durfee & Peck..... | Supplies and goods delivered from October, 1868, to August 31, 1869..... | 32,624 12 |
| Durfee & Peck..... | Rent of buildings for one year, ending July 1, 1870—27 rooms..... | 3,500 00 |
| Durfee & Peck..... | For 200 to 15 hay delivered at Fort Berthold agency, under contract executed on the 15th day of July, 1869, at \$20 per ton..... | 4,000 00 |
| L. S. Kelly..... | For services as herder, from July 20, 1868, to December 8, 1868, inclusive, at \$35 per month..... | 161 00 |
| E. H. Durfee..... | 1 chest carpenters' tools, May 10, 1869..... | 150 00 |
| J. B. Sharron..... | Services as laborer from April 26, 1869, to June 15, 1869, at \$35 per month..... | 58 33 |
| Daniel C. Driggs..... | Services as laborer from March 22, to May 13, 1869, at \$35 per month..... | 60 66 |
| George D. Hall..... | Bill of hardware and iron, May 5, 1869..... | 466 71 |
| A. Jones..... | Services as laborer from November 19 to November 27, 1868, at \$35 per month..... | 10 50 |
| Frank Hague..... | Services as laborer from September 9 to November 23, 1868, at \$35 per month..... | 84 00 |
| W. D. Parshall..... | Services as laborer from September 3 to November 29, 1868, inclusive, at \$35 per month..... | 130 36 |
| Alfred Whitney..... | Services as laborer from March 15 to March 27, 1868, 13 days, at \$35 per month..... | 15 08 |
| A. W. Brockmire..... | Services as laborer from October 1, 1868, to March 24, 1869, at \$35 per month..... | 203 00 |
| Benjamin Briggs..... | Services as laborer from October 16, 1868, to February 7, 1869, at \$35 per month..... | 142 33 |

List of vouchers certified by late Agent Wilkinson, &c.—Continued.

| Names of claimants. | Articles. | Amount. |
|-----------------------|--|------------|
| William Benoist | Services as laborer from July 20 to November 20, 1868, and from January 27 to February 27, 1869, at \$35 per month | \$175 00 |
| D. W. Barney | Services as laborer from June 20, 1868, to October 1, 1868, at \$35 per month | 116 66 |
| D. W. Barney | Services as carpenter from October 1, 1868, to May 10, 1869, at \$60 per month | 431 60 |
| Durfee & Peck | Bill of medicines | 1, 530 80 |
| Durfee & Peck | Bill of tin ware | 672 65 |
| B. H. Wood | Services as farmer from June 1, 1868, to June 30, 1869, at \$100 per month | 1, 300 00 |
| J. P. Burgman | Services as head carpenter from April 1, 1869, to August 31, 1869, at \$100 per month | 500 00 |
| | Total | 63, 203 05 |

Articles of agreement entered into this 15th day of July, A. D. 1869, between M. Wilkinson, United States Indian agent, of Fort Berthold, Dakota Territory, of the first part, and E. H. Durfee and C. K. Peck, trading under the firm of Durfee & Peck, and both of the city and county of Leavenworth, State of Kansas, of the second part.

This agreement witnesseth, that the said M. Wilkinson, for and on behalf of the United States of America, and the said said E. H. Durfee and C. K. Peck, trading under the firm of Durfee & Peck, for themselves, their heirs, executors, and administrators, have mutually agreed, and by these presents do mutually covenant and agree, to and with each other as follows, viz :

First. The said Durfee & Peck agree to deliver to the said M. Wilkinson, United States Indian agent, at Fort Berthold, Dakota Territory, on or before the 15th day of September, A. D. 1869, the following supplies, viz : two hundred tons of hay, of two thousand pounds per ton.

Second. The hay provided for herein shall be good and merchantable, and shall be well stacked by the said Durfee & Peck at such place at or in the vicinity of Fort Berthold, Dakota Territory, as the said M. Wilkinson may designate.

Third. For the hay delivered and accepted, in accordance with the foregoing specifications, the said Durfee & Peck shall receive twenty dollars per ton.

Fourth. If, at any time, there shall be good reason for believing that the said Durfee & Peck will fail to furnish the supply herein named within the time specified, then the said M. Williamson shall have power to purchase a full sufficiency thereof, and the difference between the contract price (herein given) and the price paid by the said M. Wilkinson shall be charged to the said Durfee & Peck.

In witness whereof, the undersigned have hereunto set their hands and seals the date first above given.

[SEAL.]

M. WILKINSON,
United States Agent.
E. H. DURFEE.
C. K. PECK.

[SEAL.]

[SEAL.]

Witness :

JOHN H. CHARLES.
JAS. I. EARLE.
W. A. ELIOT.

[5-c. int. rev. stamp.]

I certify, on honor, that the above amount of hay was received by me, in accordance with the above contract, this 25th day of August, 1869.

M. WILKINSON,
United States Agent.

FORT BERTHOLD, D. T.,
July 20, 1869.

SIR: In the inclosed bill of indebtedness of the United States to Messrs. Durfee & Peck, you will find one item of "rent of buildings for one year ending July 1, 1870."

With reference to this item, I would state, that I am occupying for the use and benefit of the United States twenty-seven (27) rooms as agent's residence, office, residences of employés, shops, and warerooms, for which they have charged no more than was allowed and paid by the department last year for fourteen (14) rooms.

I consider the rent charged very low, considering the number and quality of the buildings used; and as they are actually required for the good of the public service, would respectfully recommend that the amount claimed be paid in full.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. WILKINSON,
U. S. Indian Agent.

JOHN A. BURBANK,
Governor and *ex officio* Sup't Indian Affairs, Yancton, D. T.

FORT BERTHOLD, D. T.,
August 31, 1869.

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for your approval the following vouchers, viz:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Bill of goods purchased from Durfee & Peck, including one year's rent of buildings..... | \$36, 124 12 |
| Voucher for two hundred tons hay furnished by them, under contract, for use of stock..... | 4, 000 00 |
| Total..... | <u>40, 124 12</u> |

As my accompanying report of employés shows, I have had thirty-nine white men and Indians employed in different capacities during the past year. There are, as you are aware, over three thousand Indians in my agency, and all stations at or near Fort Berthold, D. T. They are Indians who have always been warm friends of the whites, and never committed any depredations upon the frontier settlers in our Territory.

The Sioux tribes of Indians, which have recently been placed on reservations contiguous to Fort Berthold, are their inveterate enemies, and avail themselves of every opportunity to molest them by stealing and killing what little stock they have and killing and scalping any of their men, women, and children, wherever found. When the Sioux were stationed, as formerly, out in the Powder River country, these incursions and invasions upon their reservation by war parties were few and the hostile parties comparatively small in numbers, so that they were but little in fear of them, and were enabled to support themselves to a great extent by the hunt. During the past year they have not dared to venture out in quest of game, but have been compelled to remain at home, and have consequently been dependent upon such supplies as I could furnish them to prevent *starvation* among them. The Sioux have come up to Fort Berthold in well organized war parties, on several different occasions during the year, from the reservations below, and attacked them on their own ground, but owing to the vigilance among

the Indians of my agency, and by means of the ammunition I have provided for them by purchase, they have in every instance repulsed them, not, however, without loss of life and considerable of their stock.

It is impossible for you to appreciate the difficulties I have labored under on account of the few supplies furnished these Indians by the government, and were it not that I was enabled to pledge the faith of the government in making these purchases, they would have died by hundreds. Even as it was, the purchases were not sufficient to prevent considerable suffering among them, as I was desirous to keep the amount of my indebtedness on their account within as small a compass as possible. As it is, however, I think that the amount, *per capita*, will compare very favorably with *any* agency comprising as great a number.

During the winter, by aid of the mill furnished me and the men I have been permitted to employ, I have succeeded in getting out a large quantity of lumber and completing quite an amount of fencing for the protection of their crops. The Indians of my agency are industrious and only need encouragement and assistance by government for a few years to render them self-supporting. The Indians comprising my agency feel very much aggrieved that those Indians who have always been hostile to the government, and have grown rich (as they consider it) by depredations upon the frontier settlers, should now be placed upon reservations and be bountifully supplied with mills, stock, and provisions, while they who have always been friendly to the whites are only partially supplied by government with the necessaries of life, and their families, who are dearer to them than their own lives, are left to starvation or only such partial supplies as their agent is able to purchase upon the credit of the government. Permit me to urge, through you, upon the Interior Department, that they should furnish such supplies for these friendly Indians as will enable them to protect and support their families, and defend themselves against those who have always been hostile to the government, and are their particular enemies, because they have always proved true to the whites.

Messrs. Durfee & Peck have always been ready to furnish subsistence at my order for the Indians of my agency as well as for my employés, and I trust that an early appropriation will be made to satisfy the indebtedness which I have considered it necessary to incur.

M. WILKINSON,
U. S. Agent.

His Excellency Governor J. A. BURBANK,
Ex officio Sup't of Indian Affairs, Dakota Territory.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
Yancton, Dakota Territory, November 22, 1869.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith the following named vouchers and accounts, belonging to Messrs. Durfee & Peck, issued and certified to by late Agent Wilkinson, of Upper Missouri agency, viz:

Laborers' vouchers amounting in the aggregate to \$8,711 59.

Bill rendered for supplies furnished for support and protection of employés and Indians at Upper Missouri agency, amounting to \$32,624 62.

Also item added to said bill of \$3,500, being for rent of building for use of agent and employés at Upper Missouri agency. See letter of Agent Wilkinson dated August 31, 1869, in explanation of account for supplies furnished; also his letter of July 20, 1869, in explanation of the item "rent of building," both of which you will find herewith inclosed.

6 APPROPRIATION FOR FORT BERTHOLD INDIAN AGENCY.

Account for furnishing and delivering at Fort Berthold or Upper Missouri agency, two hundred (200) tons of hay, amounting to \$4,000. (See article of agreement between late Agent Wilkinson and Messrs. Durfee & Peck, herewith inclosed.)

Voucher for one chest carpenters' tools, amounting to \$150, making a total of \$48,985 21.

With reference to the laborers' vouchers, I would say that it has been represented to me, and I have good reason to believe, that Messrs. Durfee & Peck furnished employes at Upper Missouri agency with clothing, and such other articles as they needed from time to time, on credit, (employes not having been paid for their service,) and when Agent Wilkinson made his final settlement with his employes, Messrs. Durfee & Peck took their vouchers at their face, and after settling their claims for goods sold, paid the balance due them in money.

With reference to the account for furnishing hay, I would state that this office has endeavored to investigate as to its justness, and from the best information to be readily obtained, I think that, considering the fact that grass is scarcer the further up the river we go, and that it is therefore more difficult and expensive to make and deliver hay, and considering also the terms upon which the army contract for hay at Fort Rice was let the present year, the account in question is just and reasonable.

On taking charge of this superintendency, I found the financial affairs of a number of the agencies in a very bad condition, and that a large indebtedness had been incurred, as indicated by the large number of claims presented at this office.

I have endeavored, as far as was practicable, to collect and forward these vouchers and evidences of indebtedness of every description, (except those approved by General Harney,) to your office for payment, with a view of getting the superintendency out of debt.

As much depends upon a prompt fulfillment of contracts in a country like this, where laborers are extremely scarce, and in many cases hardly to be obtained on any terms, it is my wish and intention to so manage the business of the superintendency, that persons performing service or furnishing articles for the benefit of the agencies will feel an assurance that they will be able, without unnecessary delay, to collect what is justly due them.

I would most respectfully recommend that the vouchers and accounts submitted herewith be paid by draft issued in favor of Messrs. Durfee & Peck, and sent to the care of this office. But in case the funds at your disposal will not admit of the payment of the entire amount due said firm, I would respectfully ask that so much thereof as can be now paid be forwarded in the shape suggested, and the balance be submitted with your annual estimate to Congress, to await appropriations for its cancelment.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. BURBANK,

Governor and ex officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Hon. E. S. PARKER,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs.