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**Letter from the Secretary of War, to the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, in relation to the payment of Indian annuities, and the necessity of imposing further restrictions upon Indian traders.**

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S. Doc. No. 198, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1838)

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TO THE

Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, in relation to the payment of Indian annuities, and the necessity of imposing further restrictions upon Indian traders.

FEBRUARY 14, 1838.

Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,  
February 13, 1838.

SIR: Concurring in the views expressed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in the accompanying communication, I deem it my duty to lay it, with its accompanying documents, before the Committee on Indian Affairs, for such action as that committee may deem requisite and proper.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

J. R. POINSETT.

HOB. HUGH L. WHITE,

Chairman Committee Indian Affairs, Senate.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Office Indian Affairs, February 12, 1838.

SIR: I have the honor to submit copies of communications from several agents and officers of the Indian Department, relative to the trade with the Indian tribes, and the payment of their annuities. In connexion with these, I would invite your attention to the extracts from the reports of the superintendents and others, Nos. 21, 22, and 23, appended to the annual communication from this office at the beginning of the present session. These all concur in the opinions that the annuities should be paid in goods and to heads of families, and that some changes in the laws relative to the trade, imposing further restrictions upon the traders, are essential. In confirmation of these views, extracts from other communications, which exhibit the occurrences at some of the payments the last year, are also submitted. I am satisfied, from the uniform tenor of these papers, that the difficulties

that, in some cases, attended and followed the offer of a moiety of the annuities in goods, were caused by the large indebtedness of the Indians to their traders, and to the undue influence of the latter over them. In the propriety and wisdom of that offer, under the circumstances, I entertain no doubt; and I am equally confident that this influence is not only prejudicial to the Indians, but has been frequently exercised to defeat negotiations with them, and to prevent the accomplishment of objects sanctioned by treaties, and others devised and calculated to promote their welfare and permanent improvement. Two instances of interference with negotiations authorized by law are stated by the superintendent of Wisconsin Territory, in the report from this office of January 9, 1837, which may be found at pages 153 and 154 of the pamphlet copy of my last annual report. The subjects herein adverted to are submitted for such direction as you may think proper to give to them.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

C. A. HARRIS,  
*Commissioner.*

Hon. J. R. POINSETT,  
*Secretary of War.*

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*List of papers transmitted with the preceding letter.*

1. Extract from a letter, A. C. Pepper, Indian agent, Indian Agency, Indiana, dated July 3, 1837.
2. Extract from a letter from Major Jno. Garland, Mackinac, dated September 9, 1837.
3. Extracts from a letter from J. W. Edmonds, Detroit, dated September 11, 1837.
4. Letter from J. W. Edmonds, with the enclosures, New York, dated December 28, 1837.
5. Letter from Captain Hitchcock, St. Louis, dated September 29, 1837.
6. Letter from John Dougherty, Washington, dated December 6, 1837.
7. Report of Joshua Pilcher, St. Louis, dated December 26, 1837.
8. Printed report of J. W. Edmonds, on occurrences at the Potawatamie payment in 1837.
9. Extract from a letter from Major Jno. Garland, Detroit, dated January 17, 1838.
10. Extract from a letter from Lawrence Taliaferro, Washington, dated January 20, 1838.
11. Letter from Lawrence Taliaferro, Bedford, dated February 5, 1838.

## No. 1.

*Extract from a letter from A. C. Pepper, Indian agent, dated Indian Agency, Indiana, July 3, 1837.*

SIR: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 23d June, and the enclosures, except the revised regulations Nos. 3 and 4, and the copies of the law of 1834, which have not come to hand. Your instructions shall be literally complied with, so far as their fulfilment may depend upon any efforts or influence on my part. I doubt not the wants of the Indians will be much better supplied, and at cheaper rates, by the method of paying annuities suggested by you than any other; but it is due to truth that I should frankly state, I have no hope of success in the undertaking, especially with the Miamies, some of whose principal traders are Indians possessing great influence. You will see at once that any explanation as to the cheapness of goods supplied by the Government, in comparison with the high prices which these men have been accustomed to charge, will be offensive to them, and the *attempt will be made* by all the traders to give this measure the aspect of favoritism towards the New York merchants, to the exclusion of the western dealers, both in the sale of goods and the collection of debts. While I most heartily concur in the propriety of your views, and the justness of the motives that have influenced you to adopt the measure proposed, it seems to me it would be disingenuous not to advise you of the character of the opposition from this quarter. \* \* \*

## No. 2.

*Extract from a letter from Major Jno. Garland, dated Mackinac, 9th September, 1837.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The Indian agent at Green Bay has had a petition presented to him signed by the chiefs of the Menomponies, requesting their great father to appoint a kind of sutler to be located in the Indian country, with goods and provisions to be dealt out to them according to their necessities, and the amount to be deducted from their next year's annuity. This project is, I understand, sanctioned by the agent. It comes with a bad grace from these chiefs, for in council, not a week previous, they refused, in the most decided manner, to receive any more of their great father's goods. These Indians are undoubtedly in a very destitute condition, but unless they are in a great measure thrown upon their own exertions for support, they will loiter around such a depot as is proposed, and ultimately become entirely worthless, and dependant upon the bounty of the Government. I would advise no other measure for their relief, other than the depositing of a few thousand bushels of corn in the hands of the disbursing agent at Green Bay, to be dealt out to them in cases of absolute distress. This corn can be contracted for, and the amount deducted from their next year's annuity.

## No. 3.

*Extracts from a letter from J. W. Edmonds, dated Detroit, 11th September, 1837.*

I promised you a more detailed report of my proceedings, as the substitute of Major Garland, in making to the Menomonie Indians the payment of their annuities.

I visited the payment ground for the purpose of consulting the chiefs as to the proper persons to be the recipients of their bounty, in the distribution of the half-breed fund. The place appointed was about seventy miles from Green Bay; and I preceded the Major two or three days for the purpose of getting through my business with the chiefs before his arrival, so as not to interfere with his business. He arrived, however, before I completed my business, but so very ill from a severe attack of bilious fever that I thought his life could be preserved only by causing him to be immediately sent back to the settlement, where he could receive medical aid. To relieve his anxiety, I assumed upon myself the discharge of his duties. The goods invoiced at \$13,194 were on the ground, and he delivered to me in coin \$14,195. I held one council with the chiefs before he started on his return.

In answer to their question as to how much specie I was going to pay them, I told them \$13,000, and then I offered them the goods for the same amount, and explained the reasons for doing so. I asked them, before they decided whether they would take them, to look at and examine them, and examine the prices, and see whether there were any they did not want.

The next morning they came into council, and, without making the examination which I requested, they said they would not take the goods. I told them they had decided like children. That the goods were what they wanted, and what they would buy of the traders if they had the money, and they did not know whether we offered them to them for less or more than the traders would. I then repeated to them the substance of your instructions upon that point, and requested them to think of it until next day. But they answered they were not children, to say one thing one day and another the next day—they would not take the goods; and so the council broke up.

It was so palpably for the interest of the Indians to take the goods that I became satisfied that it was not their own notions, but some external influence which operated with them.

I then had an interview with some of the traders and half-breeds. I told them that though I could not put my finger on any particular act of any one person, yet I was so well satisfied of the existence of a counteracting influence, that I should have no hesitation in reporting to Government my belief, that to such influence entirely, the refusal of the Indians was properly attributable, and I thought it intolerable that, while they were asking Government to protect them in the collection of their debts, and to aid them in receiving a large donation from the Indians, they should use their efforts to thwart the measures of Government and injure the Indians. Some frankly avowed they had used their influence to that end, and would continue so to do, because they had laid in a large stock of goods, and must sell them or lose money. Some denied that they had used any influence, yet denounced the measure of Government as injurious to them: while others said they had

not said any thing to the Indians upon the subject, because they had not been requested to do so. They thought it best for the Indians to take the goods, and they would say so if I wished it. I told them I was instructed not to press the goods upon the Indians, and all I asked was that they might be permitted to exercise their own judgment, free from any external influence.

That same night I was informed that the chiefs were holding councils with each other and with some of the traders and half-breed claimants. The next morning they came into council and told me they had altered their minds, and concluded to take the goods on the conditions mentioned in a paper which they handed me. I saw, at a cursory glance, that those conditions were entirely inadmissible, and that the papers being made public would give rise to a very high and unpleasant excitement on the ground. I broke up the council, however, without giving any answer. I consulted with Colonel Boyd and with Colonel Swasy, who was then acting as my secretary, and was happy to find their opinion coincided with mine. I then caused my determination to be made known to the actors in that operation, together with my fears for the consequences to themselves, in case I should make the contents of the paper public. After a little while, they requested leave of me to withdraw the paper. To that I could not consent, because it had come to me from the chiefs, and not from them. The chiefs could withdraw the paper if they chose, or they could withdraw the condition they had attached to the receipt of the goods.

I had, in the mean time, notified the chiefs to meet me in council. They did so, and I told them that I could not accede to their proposition; that by the treaty they had a right to designate who should receive portions of the half-breed fund, but it was my duty to determine what that portion should be, and that duty I should discharge without any reference to their acceptance or refusal of the goods; that the two matters were entirely distinct, and must be kept so.

In their reply, they withdrew the condition they had attached to their acceptance of the goods, and merely requested that the persons named on the paper might receive a share of the half-breed fund.

I enclose you a copy of the paper presented to me by the chiefs, that my remarks may be more intelligible.

In one of their councils, the chiefs had said that some of the goods were such as they did not like, or want. At this last council I requested them to tell me what they were. They selected two individuals to examine as to the kind of goods and the prices, who reported favorably as to every thing but the cotton shirtings and sheetings, which they said the Indians did not want. These articles amounted to \$302.85, and I told the chiefs I would pay them that amount in coin.

I then offered the chiefs the goods in bulk, but they declined that, and requested me to distribute to each his proper share.

On the following days, I proceeded in and accomplished the distribution, adopting the same plan which was pursued at Mackinac last year, and finally distributed to them goods, amounting, according to the invoice, to \$12,697.15, being the amount of the cottons (viz: \$302.85) less than \$13,000.

The chiefs had been impressed with various notions which stood in my way. One I had removed by deducting the cottons; another was, that this proposition to pay in goods this year was only an entering wedge for future

operations of the same kind. I expressed to them my opinion, that it would always be better for them to receive their annuity in goods or provisions, but that it was left to themselves to decide; and we were particularly instructed to inquire whether they would receive their next annuity in goods or coin. They answered very promptly, and at almost every council repeated it, that they wanted their annuity in coin.

Another was, that the goods proposed to be delivered were inferior in quality and dearer in price, than those which the traders would furnish.

I know very little about Indian goods, their quality or price, having, indeed, no other information than such as I have acquired during the short period I have been engaged in your department.

Relying, therefore, upon your instructions to Major Garland, I assured the Indians that the goods had been purchased directly of the importers, and therefore they would receive them cheaper from Government than they could from the trader; I instanced to them particularly the blankets, which I supposed were charged on the invoice at \$5 the pair.

So confident was I of the comparative cheapness of the goods, that I had no hesitation in showing the invoice to all who wished to see it. All agreed with me in the belief that the blankets were charged by the pair, and not by the single one. I accordingly began to tear up and assort the goods for distribution. During this time, some of the traders had been very busy in impressing the Indians with the belief that I was intentionally deceiving them, and in inducing them still to refuse taking the goods. To counteract these operations, I called the chiefs together, and assured them that in my assertions as to the cheapness of the goods generally, I had represented what both the Government and I believed to be true; that if it should turn out to be otherwise, they could safely rely upon the justice of the Government to make up any proper deficiency. In order, however, to have a definite point to their complaints, I requested them to appoint some two or three persons to confer with the sub-agent and myself upon the matter, and ascertain what deduction they claimed, and then I proceeded in the distribution.

The next day I paid the Indians their money, amounting to \$13,382 85. Before I commenced paying, the chiefs handed me a paper signed by their friends; which I enclose to you, showing the amount of their claim. I immediately protested against it; first, as being unfair in itself, because I knew that neither of the gentlemen who had signed it would, for a moment, think of delivering goods to them at the prices which they had there fixed; and, secondly, because they had not consulted with the agent and myself as I had had requested. I told them, however, that I would represent their wishes to the department.

In the whole of my operations as to the goods, I met with opposition both secret and open from persons who were not Indians, and whose frequent method of attack was misrepresentation of my motives and conduct. I was not, however, willing to abandon my efforts; because I was not only persuaded that it was best for the Indians to take the goods, but they were, or would be, absolutely necessary for their comfort during the approaching winter, and I was informed that the money which they would receive would scarcely be enough to pay their debts.

I am confirmed in this belief by this fact: although the chiefs so frequently insisted to me that their next year's annuity should be paid in coin, yet, before I left Green Bay, Colonel Boyd informed me that he had received a

communication from the chiefs, requesting that their annuity should be advanced to them during the winter in provisions and clothing, alleging, as a reason for their request, that otherwise they must suffer!

How much more would they have suffered, if they had not taken the goods you sent them?

\* \* \* \* \*

I enclose, herewith, the following papers on this subject:

A copy of the paper handed me by the chiefs, showing the condition on which they would take the goods. This is marked A.

The paper of their friends, showing how much deduction they claim on account of the price of the goods. Marked B.

\* \* \* \* \*

A.

BUTTE DE MORIS, August 23, 1837.

The chiefs and headmen of the Menomonic nation of Indians would represent to the commissioner of the United States, their regret that any misunderstanding should take place between the President of the United States and themselves, respecting the late treaty.

In order, therefore, to reconcile the difficulties which exist, the said chiefs and headmen hereby agree to take the goods now sent for the nation, (except such articles as are not useful for them, say \$700 or \$800 worth of white cotton, satinett, &c.,) and they request their great father not to send them any goods hereafter, but the money; on condition that the commissioner of the United States will allow the half-breed money to be distributed as follows, viz:

To the family of Augustin Grignon, Nancy, his wife	-	\$1,000	
Margarett, daughter	-	1,000	
Charles, son	-	1,000	
Alexander, son	-	1,000	
Paul, son	-	1,000	
Sophia, daughter	-	1,000	
To the family of John Lawe,	Rachel, daughter	-	1,000
George, son	-	1,000	
David, son	-	1,000	
Rebecca, daughter	-	1,000	
Mariah, daughter	-	1,000	
Polly, daughter	-	1,000	
Jane, daughter	-	1,000	
Polonia, daughter	-	1,000	
André Vednx	-	1,000	
Lewis Grignon's family,	Charlotte, daughter	-	1,000
Agatè, daughter	-	1,000	
George, son	-	1,000	
Elizabeth, daughter	-	1,000	
Ursil, daughter	-	1,000	
Pierre, son	-	1,000	
Amable Grignon's family,	André, son	-	1,000
Theotes, son	-	1,000	
Gnaa, son	-	1,000	



	Marie, daughter	-	-	\$1,000
	Jean Bte., son	-	-	1,000
Jaques Polier's family,	Jaques, jr., son	-	-	1,000
	Paul, son	-	-	1,000
	Lewis, son	-	-	1,000
Robert Grignon's family,	Susan, daughter	-	-	1,000
	Louise, daughter	-	-	1,000
	Juliette, daughter	-	-	1,000
Bernard Grignon	-	-	-	1,000
William Powell	-	-	-	1,000
Paul Grignon's family,	Harriet, daughter	-	-	500
	Lizette, daughter	-	-	500
	Rachel, daughter	-	-	500
	Amable, son	-	-	500
	Marie, daughter	-	-	500
William Franks; Thomas Franks, John Franks, Sarah Franks, each				500
Benjamin Route	-	-	-	500
Robert Grignon	-	-	-	1,000

The residue of the money to be divided equally between such as the commissioner may determine upon.

## B.

25	pair 3½ point Mackinac blankets, at \$8 50	-	-	\$212 50
140	pair 3 point Mackinac blankets, at \$6 50	-	-	910 00
45	pair 2½ point Mackinac blankets, at \$5	-	-	225 00
5	pair 2½ point Mackinac blankets, at \$5	-	-	25 00
24	pair 2 point Mackinac blankets, at \$3 50	-	-	84 00
22	pair 1½ point Mackinac blankets, at \$2 75	-	-	60 50
12	pair 1 point Mackinac blankets, at \$2 25	-	-	27 00
8	pair Mackinac wrappers, at \$3	-	-	24 00
163½	yards fine blue cloth, at \$3	-	-	490 50
59½	yards superfine blue cloth, at \$4	-	-	238 00
487½	yards grey list blue cloth, at \$2 25	-	-	1,096 31
1,016½	yards save list blue cloth, at \$1 75	-	-	1,778 87
59	yards save list green cloth, at \$2 50	-	-	147 50
282½	yards save list scarlet cloth, at \$1 75	-	-	494 81
169½	yards fine satinett, at \$1 05	-	-	177 98
252½	yards common satinett, at 50 cents	-	-	126 25
241½	yards linsey, at 28 cents	-	-	67 62
136½	yards scarlet flannel, at 37½ cents	-	-	51 19
1,703½	yards super blue prints, at 15½ cents	-	-	264 00
1,755	yards fancy prints, at 20 cents	-	-	351 00
766½	yards ¾ domestic plaid, at 11 cents	-	-	84 35
896½	yards ¾ domestic plaid, at 16 cents	-	-	143 48
160	black silk handkerchiefs, at 37½ cents	-	-	60 00
24	cross barred handkerchiefs, at 37½ cents	-	-	9 00
174	cotton flagg handkerchiefs, at 12½ cents	-	-	21 75
372	¾ cotton shawls, at 62½ cents	-	-	232 50
245	¾ cotton shawls, at 75 cents	-	-	183 75

235	$\frac{3}{4}$ cotton shawls, at $87\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	\$205 62
28	gross assorted gartering, at \$3 50	-	-	-	98 00
44	pieces No. 3 taffeta ribbon; at $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	16 50
62	pieces No. 4 taffeta ribbon, at $62\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	38 75
58	pieces No. 6 taffeta ribbon, at $87\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	50 75
17	pieces No. 9 taffeta ribbon, at \$1 $37\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	23 37
50	dozen cartouch and scalping knives, at \$1 $37\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	68 75
25	dozen Jack knives, at \$1 $87\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	46 87
20	dozen scissors, at \$1 $87\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	37 50
125	pounds white and brown thread, at \$1	-	-	-	125 00
60 $\frac{1}{2}$	worsted yarn, at \$1 50	-	-	-	90 75
96	Indian guns, at \$4 50	-	-	-	432 00
600	pounds powder, at 22 cents	-	-	-	132 00
2,000	gun flints, at \$1 50	-	-	-	3 00
80	American cast steel half axes, at 75 cents	-	-	-	60 00
25	pounds white beads, at $62\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	15 62
25	pounds black beads, at $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents	-	-	-	9 37
25	bunches cut glass beads, at 25 cents	-	-	-	6 25
25	dozen paper case glasses, at 45 cents	-	-	-	11 25
26	powder horns, at \$1 50	-	-	-	39 00
80	frying pans, at 44 cents	-	-	-	35 20
10 $\frac{1}{2}$	pounds Chinese vermilion, at \$1 75	-	-	-	18 37
1	gross Indian awls, at \$2 25	-	-	-	2 25
2	gross gun worms, at \$1 50	-	-	-	3 00
48	worsted sashes, at 30 cents	-	-	-	14 40
					\$8,070 43
Transportation on 9,311 pounds merchandise, from New York to Green Bay, at \$2 20 per cwt.					204 84
					\$8,275 27
Amount of Suydam, Jackson, & Co.'s bill for Menomonies					13,000 00
					\$4,724 73

The undersigned having been requested by the chiefs of the Menomonie nation to examine both the quality and price of the goods purchased by the United States Government of Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., of New York, in part payment of their annuity of 1837, report as follows:

That many of the articles are of an inferior quality, and all charged at far beyond the market price of the same articles.

They have copied the invoice and attached prices they consider to be fair and of the full value, amounting in all, including transportation to Green Bay, to \$8,275 27.

ROBERT STUART;  
CHAS. R. BRUSH,  
HIRAM B. POTTER.

N. B.—There are some of the within articles which I had not an opportunity of comparing with similar articles purchased in New York this season, and respecting which I cannot certify positively; but, on the whole, I am satisfied the within valuation cannot be much out of the way.

ROBERT STUART.

No. 4.

NEW YORK, December 28, 1837.

SIR: In addition to my letter of the 11th of September last, I deem it proper to make to you the following statement in reference to the distribution of goods to the Menomonié Indians.

The ground on which the white men who surrounded them claimed they had been injured, was that the goods were not furnished to them by Government upon the advantageous terms, as to price, which were professed in your instructions, nor indeed at as low a price as the traders of the vicinity would furnish them.

How true these allegations were, I could not determine without further information. I took measures to obtain that information. I addressed a note to the assistant quartermaster stationed at Fort Howard, requesting him to ascertain the prices at which the traders in that vicinity usually sold similar goods to the Indians.

Not having had access to the claims presented and allowed under the treaty with the Menomonies, I was deprived of that means of obtaining the necessary information, than which nothing would have been more conclusive; and not having received any reply from the assistant quartermaster, I am not able to determine how well grounded the allegation is, except from analogy.

On my return to Detroit from Green Bay, I met with one of the members of the house which had taken the contract for the supply of those goods. I apprized him of the operations at the *Butte de Morle*, and requested him to obtain information of the prices of goods sold to the Indians at Mackinac, or other trading posts in Michigan.

In consequence of this request, I have been furnished with letters from B. B. Kercheval, Esq., of Detroit, and from John A. Drew, of Mackinac, (one of the firm of Biddle and Drew,) a house very extensively engaged in the Indian trade. Those letters are herewith transmitted.

The trade at Mackinac is probably a fair criterion by which to judge of the trade at Green Bay and its vicinity. Both of those places are nearer the frontier than the Wabash in Indiana, and, of course, goods are retailed at higher prices at the former than at the latter place. I say of course, because in Indiana the number and credit of the Indians are both less, and the number of traders is proportionably greater than on the borders of Lakes Huron and Michigan.

You are aware that my recent examinations of the claims against the Potawatamies of the Wabash have given me an opportunity of knowing the prices at which goods are sold to them. I have prepared and hereto annex a table showing the prices fixed by Messrs. Stewart, Brush, & Potter, and the prices at which similar goods are sold in Indiana. This comparison cannot be objected to when it is recollected that the competition is greater, and the trade more active and expensive, in Indiana than in Wisconsin.

Annexed, you will also receive a correspondence between Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., and myself, by which it appears that Messrs. Stuart, Brush, & Potter have put the prices of many articles below their wholesale price, deliverable at New York; have added nothing for risk, profits, or insurance; have stated the transportation at less than the actual cost, and have made no allowance for other necessary expenses attending the delivery at so distant a post.

There are other circumstances attending their certificate which must detract from its force.

It will be seen that they have made an error of \$1,100 in the footing of their columns. They state the amount of the bill at their prices, at \$8,070 43, when, correctly added, it amounts to \$9,170 43.

Only one of them (Mr. Potter) was engaged in the Indian trade, and he had been so engaged only a few months, and neither of them, unless it might be that one, could have had an opportunity of knowing the prices of goods at New York after the suspension of specie payments.

Besides, Mr. Stuart was one of the two persons chosen by the Indians to look over the invoice of Suydam, Jackson, & Co., and say what articles were not useful. He had the invoice some time in his possession, and surely if the prices were so extravagant as to justify a deduction of more than one-third to bring them down to a fair valuation, it might be expected that the discovery would have been made then.

In their certificate they speak of the goods being charged far beyond the "market price." The market price at what place, Green Bay or New York? They do not say. If the latter, as is most probable, then it will be seen that they have erred in not allowing something for the risk, or enough for the expense, of transportation; that they have erred in not valuing the goods as high as the wholesale prices in New York; and have made a material error of \$1,100 in footing up their columns.

I have no other means of determining whether the goods were, or were not, delivered at fair prices; but having in the course of my inquiries become possessed of the information to which I have alluded, I have felt it my duty to communicate it to you, as it may assist you in arriving at a just conclusion upon this question.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. W. EDMONDS.

C. A. HARRIS, Esq.

*Com. of Indian Affairs.*

P. S.—I ought also to call your attention to another error into which Mr. Stuart and his associates have fallen. In making out the amount of their bill at \$8,070 43, they have not taken into account the shirting and sheeting included in the invoice of Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., but have included them in the sum of \$13,000, from which they deduct the amount of the bill as they made it out.

The whole amount of the invoice was \$13,194; and not \$13,000, as they assume it.

If they had stated the matter correctly, it would have been thus:

Whole invoice	-	-	-	\$13,194 00
Deduct shirting and sheeting which the Indians refused to take	-	-	-	302 85

\$12,891 15

From this, deduct the bill as made out by Mr. Stuart and others, including transportation	-	-	-	8,275 27
---	---	---	---	----------

Leaving a balance of	-	-	-	\$4,615 88
instead of \$4,724 73, as they state it.	-	-	-	

This error of \$108 85, added to the other error of \$1,100, makes a total of \$1,208 85 of errors in their statement, as shown by the invoice and by their own statement.

*Letter from B. B. Kercheval, Esq., to Messrs. Suydam, Jackson & Co.*

NEW YORK, October 9, 1837.

GENTLEMEN: Having been informed, when at Detroit, that a certificate in relation to the prices of certain goods furnished by you to the United States for the Indians at Green Bay, had been forwarded to Washington, and having for many years been in the habit of purchasing large amounts of Indian goods of you, with which to furnish the United States, as well as the Indians themselves, I can say, to my own knowledge, that the style and quality of Indian goods furnished by you are equal to goods furnished by any other house. I have carefully examined the prices at which the goods were charged, as well as the invoice of the articles furnished, and have no hesitation in saying that the articles named are well adapted to the wants of the Indians, and the prices charged no higher than I have been in the habit of charging for goods furnished to the Indians, as well as to the Government; when goods of that description were much lower in New York than they are now, or have been during the present year.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

B. B. KERCHEVAL.

To Messrs. SUYDAM, JACKSON, & Co.,  
New York.

*Letter from John A. Drew, Esq., to Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., dated*

NEW YORK, December 7, 1837.

GENTLEMEN: Having been informed that a certificate in relation to the prices and quality of certain goods furnished by you to the United States for the Indians at Green Bay had been forwarded to Washington, and having, for several years, been in the habit of purchasing large amounts of Indian goods of you, for furnishing the Indians at Mackinac, at which place I have, for many years, been selling to the Indians, I can say, to my own knowledge, that the style and quality of Indian goods furnished by you are equal to any furnished by other persons.

I have carefully examined the prices at which the goods were charged, as well as the invoice of articles furnished, and have no hesitation in saying that the articles named are well adapted to the wants of the Indians, and the prices charged no higher than I have been in the habit of charging the Indians, when goods of that description were much lower in New York than they have been the present year.

I beg leave to state further, that I examined part of the goods sent to Mackinac by you for the United States, and assert that the quality was good, and the goods such as I have been in the habit of supplying the Indians with, and that I would wish no better goods.

I also state that I have been informed there has been a report circulated that I had said the goods were infectious, or rather that they had the small pox in them, which kept the Indians from receiving them. This I positively deny, as had I thought such was the case, I certainly would not have opened and examined part of the goods myself, nor allowed my son to assist therein.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. DREW.

To Messrs. SUYDAM, JACKSON & Co.,  
New York:

*TABLE showing a comparison between the prices of the goods as stated by Messrs Stuart, Brush, and Potter, and as charged in the Indian trade in Indiana.*

KIND OF ARTICLES:	Prices stated by Stuart and others.	Prices charged in Indiana.
3½ point blankets, per pair	\$8 50	\$12 00 to 20 00.
3 do. do.	6 50	10 00 to 14 00.
2½ do. do.	5 00	7 50 to 10 00.
2 do. do.	3 50	
1½ do. do.	2 75	4 00.
1 do. do.	2 50	
Wrappers do.	3 00	
Fine blue cloth, per yard	3 00	6 00 to 7 00.
Super do. do.	4 00	5 00 to 9 00.
Grey list do. do.	2 25	2 50 to 3 00.
Save list do. do.	1 75	2 00 to 3 00.
Save list green do. do.	2 50	5 00 to 6 00.
Save list, scarlet do. do.	1 75	2 50.
Fine satinet, do. do.	1 05	1 50 to 2 00.
Common do. do.	50	50 to 75.
Linseys do. do.	28	
Scarlet flannel, do. do.	37½	50 to 75.
Super blue prints, do. do.	15½	25 to 50.
Fancy do. do.	20	50 to 1 00.
¼ domestic plaids, do. do.	11	16½.
4-4 do. do.	16	
Black silk handkerchiefs	37½	50 to 1 50.
Cross barred do. do.	37½	
Cotton flag do. do.	12½	25 to 50, & \$3 per doz.
5-4 cotton shawls	62½	1 00.
6-4 do. do.	75	1 00.
8-4 do. do.	87½	1 50 to 3 00.
Assorted gartering, per gross	3 50	
No. 3 Taffeta ribbon, per piece	37½	
No. 4 do. do.	62½	1 25 to 2 00.
No. 6 do. do.	87½	1 50 to 2 50.
No. 9 do. do.	1 37½	5 00.
Cartouch and scalping knife	11½	25, and \$3 per doz.
Jack-knives, per doz.	1 87½	3 00.
Scissors, do.	1 87½	3 00 to 12 00.
White and brown thread, per lb.	1 00	
Worsted yarn, do.	1 50	
Indian guns	4 50	
Powder, per lb.	22	50 to 1 00, & \$12 per keg,
Gun flints, per 100	15½	40 to 50.
Cast steel half axes	75	2 00 to 3 00.
Beads		Different kinds not discriminated.
Paper case looking glasses, per doz.	45	1 00.
Powder horns	1 50	3 00.
Frying pans	44	
Chinese vermilion, per lb.	1 75	3 75 to 7 50.
Indian awls, per gross	2 25	
Gun worms, do.	1 50	
Worsted sashes	30	

*Letter from J. W. Edmonds, Esq., United States Commissioner, to Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., dated*

NEW YORK, December 29, 1837.

GENTLEMEN: Enclosed you will receive a paper which will explain itself.

Independent of an important mistake of \$1,100 in the addition, I am convinced that the paper is otherwise exceptionable.

I will, therefore, thank you to inform me, as early as practicable, the wholesale market price in New York of the various articles named, at the time you made your contract with Government, together with the amount of expense to which you were subjected for freight, insurance, &c.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. W. EDMONDS,

U. S. Commissioner, &c.

Messrs. SUYDAM, JACKSON, & Co.,

Merchants, &c.

*Letter from Messrs. Suydam, Jackson, & Co., to J. W. Edmonds, Esq., dated*

NEW YORK, January 4, 1838.

DEAR SIR: In reply to yours of 29th ultimo, we hand you the annexed statement of the cost of certain goods furnished the United States in July last.

3 point super white Mackinac blankets, per pair	\$8 00
2½ do. do. do. do.	6 00
And other sizes in proportion:	
Fine blue cloths, per yard	3 75
Super blue cloths, per yard	4 75
Grey list blue cloths, per yard	2 25 a 2 50
Save list blue cloth, per yard	1 75 a 2 00
Save list green cloths, per yard	3 00
Save list scarlet cloths, per yard	2 25
Fine satinets, per yard	1 12½ a 1 25
Common satinets, per yard	62½ a 65
Linseys, per yard	35
Scarlet flannels, per yard	40 a 42½
Super blue prints, per yard	16½
Fancy prints, per yard	20 a 22½

The above comprises the leading articles furnished; the remainder are charged in the same proportion.

It will be recollected that, at the time the contract was made for supplying the goods, the market was nearly drained of woollens of every description, and the assortment of other goods very indifferent. It would have been impossible for any other house, either in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, to have executed it. We were only able to do it by reason of having limited our sales of Indian goods in the spring to our regular customers, in consequence of the great embarrassment of the coun-



try generally. The short time allowed for the delivery of the goods, and the prompt manner in which it was done, added greatly to the expense, and, in every instance, we believe, the day of delivery was anticipated by us.

The amount of expenses for transportation, &c., on the goods for Green Bay, is as follows :

Paid for transportation	\$212 44
For insurance	164 92
Proportion of expenses for agent, &c.	125 00
	\$502 36

Should you require any further information from us, let us know, and we will cheerfully comply with your request.

And are, dear sir,

Your obedient servants,

SUYDAM, JACKSON, & Co.

The prices annexed, you will bear in mind, are the nett cost of importation, for the British goods; and for the domestic goods, are what we paid for them.

S. J. & Co.

No. 5.

OFFICE DISB. AGENCY, INDIAN DEPARTMENT,  
St. Louis, Sept. 29, 1837.

SIR: Although my opinion may not add to the force of the considerations in favor of furnishing goods to the Indians in place of money in the payment of annuities, yet my persuasions are so strong on that side, that I cannot help recommending that measures be taken to secure to the Government an option in the matter, by inducing the tribes having claims for annuities to concede to the Government that option.

It is impossible that traders, who are obliged to have agents, clerks, and store houses; who must often wait a long time for returns, and, above all, must provide for losses on bad debts—it is impossible, I say, that these people can furnish to the Indians, in goods, anything like a fair equivalent for their money.

The Government, with very little additional expense, can furnish the full amount; can exert a salutary influence upon the habits and tastes of the Indians, in the kind of goods thrown among them, and can provide them a practical test of the value of what they use, that may serve to control the traders, and bring an odium upon their exactions.

It may be urged against the scheme, that the agents of the Government would be dishonest. The answer is ready, that this could only happen in single cases, for which there would be an immediate remedy; while in the present system, the traders, as a whole body, have a direct interest in cheating the Indians, and, in the name of trade, can systematize their operations, and almost legalize their extortions.

In establishing a different system, it might be necessary to have store houses at the agencies, or some of them, with an allowance for a few clerks,

one clerk at each principal agency, and the goods could be distributed according to the wants of the Indians, and the change of seasons.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. A. HITCHCOCK,

*Capt., M. D. Agent.*

To C. A. HARRIS, Esq.,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs.*

No. 6.

WASHINGTON, December, 6, 1837.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th November, and respectfully submit the following: To one who is acquainted with the Indian character, and nature of the Indian trade, the questions contained in your communication appear to strike forcibly on his mind, and after giving them due consideration, he can answer them only in one way, if he is a candid man and intends to perform his duty independent of men and circumstances. It is certainly the interest of every person engaged in the fur trade, that the annuities due the Indians should be paid in money, inasmuch as the trader himself ultimately receives the cash, in payment for goods sold to the Indians at an extravagant price. It is the interest, also, of this trader to lessen the value of money in the estimation of the Indians, and induce them to believe it is far below its real worth. This leads the Indians to believe the Government have cheated them in the purchase of their lands, or for what other consideration they may have been entitled to annuities.

The influence of this description of white men is exercised over the Indians; and they are advised to demand cash in payment of their annuities, when the Indians, if left to their own choice, would certainly prefer the goods, if well selected.

Would the ignorant Indians, who know nothing of the value and importance of money, demand of the Government the payment in cash, unless a powerful influence had been exercised over them by the traders? It is the interest of those persons prosecuting the fur trade to prevent, if they can, the introduction of goods into the Indian country, that they may be better enabled to keep up their own influence with the Indians, and dispose of their stock of goods to a greater advantage. Could the Indians be advised to a measure so pernicious in its effects, so opposed to their own comforts, their own wants, unless by some one in whom they reposed the utmost confidence, nay, one whom they are afraid to displease? Who are the Indian traders, and in what relation do they stand with the Indians? I will here use the Indian's own language: "He holds in one hand the powder, and in the other the balls." He can withhold munitions of war from one tribe, and give it to another; he can declare war and negotiate peace between the tribes, indirectly, if not directly. I ask, has it not been practised? Does not their present deplorable condition, their diminished numbers, vouch for such undue influence having been wielded against the various tribes? Have not almost every tribe of Indians feared the frown of the trader, and

felt his influence both for and against them? Look at the tradition of almost every tribe; have not the fur traders had a most wonderful command over them? Do you not think they could induce some of the Indians to sign a treaty (of peace or purchase) between them and the United States, or not to sign it? and would not their advice have its due weight on such occasions?

What have driven the Chyennes from the prairies north of the Missouri river, where they were once the "lords of the soil," to the confines of New Mexico, where they now rove? It was the British traders, withholding the means of warfare from them, and giving it to other tribes, whose trade was of more importance. The Arickarees, the Sioux, the Crows, the Blackfeet, and several other tribes, have records of this fact in the rude traditions of their tribes, not recorded on paper, but stamped on their memory in characters of blood.

How did the British exercise their control over the Indians during the last war? It was through their traders. Were they not the instruments (in many cases) to carry into effect the objects and intentions of the British Government? Were not some of the traders appointed to high and responsible stations on account of their supposed influence over the Indians? I ask if the house of the trader is not a theatre of political discussion? Do not the chiefs and braves assemble there? Is it not a senate in miniature? Does not each chief there speak of war and of peace, and does not the trader give his opinion? and when they become excited and elevated by ambition and avarice, does not the generosity of the trader have a powerful effect in the way of presents?

Indians are governed by fear and avarice. The trader is aware of this, and acts accordingly. He has the goods in his hands which are the wealth of the country, and this wealth gives him power.

Does not every civilized nation on earth have its importation, exportation, non-intercourse laws, and its embargoes? And is not this all concentrated in the hands of the trader, who, to suit his own interest, exercises it without regard, and often without reflection? And it affects the poor, helpless, ignorant "red skin," in the same manner it would the crowned heads of Europe, could the trader direct it against them.

It must appear manifest to every one personally acquainted with Indian affairs, their trade, habits, resources, and nature of their country, that the Department of War could use this means as an agent, little inferior to actual force. When they know the department stands ready to chastise them for a violation of the solemn obligation of a treaty, can cut off their means of warfare, their comforts, and even their necessary supplies, and that he will adopt this policy combined with his other advantages, at once induces them, through interest and fear, to avoid an evil the consequences of which they cannot withstand.

The preceding, on the subject of the payments of annuities, exhibits so clearly in my opinion the "expediency of abolishing the present system of trade with Indian tribes," that I deem it superfluous to say anything on the subject of the second question.

In reference to the third paragraph of your communication, and the postscript, it would require some time to enter into the details of explanation, and I hope you will extend me your indulgence when I only give you the outlines of my opinion relative to a subject so peculiarly important, the objects and intentions of which would be to lessen the influence of individ-

uals over the tribes and add it to the General Government, as well as to extend to the Indians our liberal and humane assistance.

The trade should be conducted exclusively by the public agents. To effect this, the goods should be furnished the agent on an invoice or estimate made out by him, having due regard to the particular tribe for which they are intended, and selected by one who is well acquainted with the quality and price of Indian goods, in order to prevent the impositions that would in some instances be practised on the Government.

Store-houses should be erected at each agency, and the trade be conducted under the exclusive direction of the agent, who should be required to remain at his station.

He should have power to cut off the trade with any tribe or tribes he may deem proper, making a special and immediate report of the cause and connecting circumstances to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Advances should be put on the goods to defray the cost and expenses thereon, and no more. One clerk and two laborers would be necessary at each house.

The Indians should be encouraged in agricultural employments by purchasing all kinds of country produce from them, as corn, beans, hay, beef, pork, &c., whenever such articles could be disposed of, or converted to the public use.

Premiums should be allowed to the Indian of each tribe, who raised the most corn, hogs, sheep, cattle, horses, &c., to the Indian who fabricated the most and best cloth, blankets, or other domestic goods, for the best mechanical production, and for literary acquirements.

Have the limits of each tribe designated, and confine them to it, as the best means to perpetuate peace among themselves.

Whenever an Indian manifests a disposition to turn his attention to the pursuits of husbandry, he should have his land separately and permanently secured to him and his heirs in "fee simple," but not transferable to any one except to a member of his own tribe. This would explain the right of property, the necessity of laws, and the advantage of that happiness and independence which is the invariable companion of domestic industry.

When it is apparent he duly appreciates such salutary benefits, the General Government should extend to him the aid of laws under a simple and wholesome form, calculated to promote his future welfare, protect his person and property, and lead him on with security until he is capable of acting for himself, after which give him a voice in the councils of our nation.

Recall all trappers, hunters, and other straggling white men, in the Rocky mountains and Indian country generally, as it is the only measure calculated to put an entire stop to the partizan warfare now existing in that region of country, between them and the various tribes.

Discourage as much as practicable, consistent with the wants of the Indians, all trade for buffalo robes; confine the trade to skins of small animals, and the productions of the soil, leaving the large game for the subsistence of more remote tribes, thereby preserving it, which will otherwise speedily become extinct; the consequences of which would throw the less civilized Indians, who are entirely ignorant of the art of agriculture, on the generosity and humanity of the General Government.

As the tribes immediately on our frontier become efficient cultivators of the soil, productive of so many advantages, the art would in time extend

and be imparted to their neighbors, and place them beyond the reach of that precarious means of subsistence attendant on the hunter's life.

It is self evident that the proposed plan, or a similar one, would be most likely to aid that "liberal justice and proper discharge of the obligations of Government," so much desired towards this unfortunate race of people, and I have no doubt that, in the end, it would be most economical; because it would enable the Indians to procure a competent living for themselves, who would otherwise be thrown on the generosity of the General Government, in the capacity of so many helpless and indigent beings.

To enable the War Department to carry into effective operation the foregoing plan, to protect our own citizens and insure tranquillity among the different tribes, a line of military posts should be established immediately on our frontier, between the whites and Indians, from the northern lakes to the Sabine river, and a superintendent located at some suitable point within the Indian territory, who should have the general supervision over the "Indian affairs" in that district of country, nor should the military have any control over the Indians, except to chastise them when it may become necessary.

A weekly or semi-weekly mail should be kept up between the different posts to facilitate military operations, and communicate information relative to Indians and whites.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. DOUGHERTY,

*Indian Agent.*

Hon. C. A. HARRIS,

*Commissioner Indian Affairs.*

No. 7.

St. Louis, December 26 1837.

SIR: In the hope that the reasons assigned in my letter of the 24th ultimo, for not having complied with your instructions of the 30th October, before I left Philadelphia, will have been satisfactory, I will now reply, as briefly as the subject will admit, to the several queries embraced in your letter of that date.

First. As to the policy of paying the Indian tribes their annuities altogether in goods,

In answer to this inquiry, I am to state, that it has always been my opinion that they should be paid in merchandise suited to their condition and habits, and nothing else; and that the general welfare of nearly all the tribes who receive annuities, requires indispensably the adoption of this measure; and to the end that an object, pregnant with so many advantages to the Indians, and so well calculated to increase the influence of the Government among them, may be attained, the agents and other officers charged with the management of their business should be required to exert all their influence to obtain a relinquishment of the privileges guaranteed to the Indians by most of the existing treaties, to choose between money and merchandise. It cannot be expected that this discretion will be exer-

cised with judgment, or result in any general benefit to the Indians; and it appears to me that nothing would be more easy than for the agents charged with the superintendence of the different Indian tribes, to demonstrate to their satisfaction the advantages resulting from payments in merchandise or provisions, instead of money. For although unacquainted with the value of the latter, they understand perfectly the use of numbers; and it would seem that nothing but a judicious explanation of these would be required, to convince them of the disadvantages resulting from payments in money. In these remarks I allude to the whole tribe, not to the few, *pampered chiefs* and *headmen*, whose interest it is to engross and appropriate to their individual use as much of the funds as possible; upon them all reasoning would be wasted.

The most intelligent among these northwestern tribes (I should perhaps except the Shawnees) have but a very imperfect knowledge of the value of money, and are still less disposed to make a proper use of it; while the *mass* of the nation is *wholly ignorant* of its value and use, and are, consequently, exposed to the impositions of every one who may be disposed to take advantage of their ignorance and habits of intoxication. It is, however, but a small portion of the funds that falls to their lot. The payments, so far as my personal knowledge extends, are generally made to a few of the *chiefs* and *headmen*, who, with all their *apparent* solicitude for their people, seldom fail to take care of themselves first, and appropriate to their own use; and that of their immediate supporters and friends, a very liberal portion of the money. In a word, they dispose of it as they please; and it is in most cases applied to the gratification of their own vicious habits, and to the pampering of a few "chiefs and headmen," to the exclusion of the great body of the tribe. The payments, when made in goods, hold out no inducements for such indulgences, and entirely defeat the purposes of those who are disposed to take advantage of their ignorance and other vices. Whether the distribution be made by the officer making the payment, or the chiefs themselves, it must be general, and the wants of every individual are supplied in proportion to the gross amount paid. In answer to this, it may be said that many of the tribes receive an amount far above what is necessary to supply their immediate wants at any one period, and, consequently, will squander and waste the surplus before the time of its usefulness arrives. In answer to this, I would ask how much sooner would this surplus be wasted, if it consisted of money, and how many more inducements would be held out to them to part with it? In the mind of every individual at all acquainted with the subject, these questions must put such an objection to rest. But in order to *insure* to the tribes thus situated the entire benefits contemplated by the Government, I would suggest, that were the annuity is found to be more than sufficient to supply the wants of the tribes at any one season, to let the payments be made by instalments, based upon the advice and information of the agent, who is, or certainly ought to be, a competent judge of the amount necessary to supply the wants of his tribe for any given period. The mode of making these payments is, at present, easy and simple; and I see no necessity for changing it, otherwise than to make it the duty of the *agent* to make the payment, instead of the officer of the army. In taking this duty out of the hands of the agents, the department has degraded them in the estimation of those they are appointed to govern, (I say *govern*, for he who is incapable of governing his Indians is, to a certain extent, unworthy of his place,) and deprived them of

the principal means of influencing the conduct and action of the Indians assigned to them. In the event of such a change, their pay-rolls, as a matter of course, should be attested by respectable witnesses. These payments, under the present system, are generally made at what are most erroneously called agencies, (for I know of no establishment within the St. Louis superintendency that deserves the name;) these are the proper places. When the amounts are so limited as to make it necessary to deliver the whole at once, let it be delivered, and the transactions of the year closed, so far as respects annuities; and when made semi-annually or quarterly, the payment should be conducted in the same manner, otherwise than to express in the receipts what portion of the annuity was delivered, either one-half or one-fourth, as the case might be. To carry out such a measure, the agents, when stationed at military posts, should be furnished with quarters—permanently with quarters—while the public storehouses, always necessary at garrisons, would afford a place of security for the goods, when circumstances made it necessary to keep them for a short time on hand. And when the agents are not stationed at military posts, quarters and other buildings must appear still more necessary. Among these would necessarily be a lumber room or warehouse, where goods under the like circumstances could be kept in safety until delivered. The only obstacle to this system, that presents itself to my mind, is, the privilege granted to Indians of demanding and receiving money. Not one dollar of additional expense need result from it; and deeply impressed as I am with the good disposition of the Government towards the Indians, and its desire to promote their welfare, I am constrained to recommend the most *decisive* and *energetic* measures for abolishing the system of cash payments, convinced as I am that it would put an end to an influence so much complained of, result in eminent advantages to the Indians, and greatly strengthen the power and influence of those intrusted with their management and control.

The goods for this purpose should be purchased wherever *experience shall have shown*—they can be obtained cheapest, having a due regard to assortment and quality. The person selecting them should be well acquainted with the kind of goods in general use among the Indians.

Your second query touches a subject of great delicacy and importance; striking, as it does, at a branch of commerce which has always been considered of great importance to this country. And fully and intimately acquainted as I am with the subject of trade and intercourse with all the Indian tribes from Lake Michigan to the mouth of the Columbia, and from the Camanchees of South Colorado to the Assineboins of the Saskatchewan, I feel no embarrassment in answering your query. And after the most mature consideration, I have to inform you that it admits of no change (however some abuses may exist) that would be likely to facilitate the wise policy of the Government in removing the Indians to our western borders. To abolish it altogether would, in my opinion, be bad policy; incompatible with the strict principles of justice, (the constitutional power of Congress to the contrary notwithstanding,) be attended with enormous expenses to the Government, without enhancing its influence among the Indians, or result in any substantial benefit to them whatever. I take it for granted that the prohibition of trade on the part of individuals or companies would have for its object the establishment of the *factory* system. Much has been said on this subject, but I have found no one to undertake the details of the plan, estimate the expense, or calculate the results. An attempt fully to develop

this subject, would carry me far beyond the limits prescribed to myself in answering your interrogatory; and as I am not disposed to waste either your own time or mine with reasons against a plan which has no existence, I will cut the matter short by the assurance that the Government *cannot* effect such an object among the remote tribes, or destroy entirely a commerce to establish which has cost the lives of a thousand of its citizens and millions of their capital; and as it has been established exclusively by individual enterprise, without any aid from the Government, it would seem, as I before remarked, incompatible with the strict principles of justice to attempt to deprive them of its benefits. If the *query* is applicable only to our border tribes, the objection to abolishing the trade will apply with equal force, and any attempt to prevent it by establishments under the direction of Government be altogether unavailing. The cordon of military posts and the military road proposed to be established along our frontier, from the Sabine to Lake Superior, are looked to as the means of ending forever all intercourse between our citizens and the Indians. No such results, however, are to flow from them; and candor admonishes me to say, that the adoption of this great and necessary measure should be supported for the true reasons that require it, and no others: those are, the protection of the Indians in the country assigned them, and the protection of our frontier inhabitants against any hostile movement on the part of the Indians.

These I hold to be the two great reasons in favor of the measure, and they carry with them too much force to leave a doubt in my mind respecting its success.

It now occurs to me that I have seen somewhere the outline of this newly proposed system, which I will assume as being applicable only to the border tribes, and endeavor to show that no good can result from so much of it as relates to the establishment of trading houses. It is proposed, first, to establish a cordon of military posts, and a communication by means of a road. This is good and indispensable. Nature has made the road, and nothing but the fortifications and troops to man them are necessary to afford complete protection to our frontier settlers, and shield the Indians from all encroachments, both from the whites and remote tribes. The troops are to be kept in *constant motion upon this road*, "moving to and fro," and *are to take up every straggling white man they meet, as well as every Indian* that attempts to cross the road, and thus effectually cut off all intercourse. This chimerical scheme has been agitated now for four years; and as I believe it has assumed a tangible shape, I feel called upon by the nature of your query to expose its deformity. These posts must be established in the Indian country. The road must pass through the Indian territory, leaving the great mass of Indians in most places between it and our settlements. There is not, nor can there be, any barrier between them, other than the boundary line drawn by a compass on the Missouri river. The whites are on one side and the Indians on the other, and I cannot believe there lives a man so credulous as to think it practicable to prevent an extensive and constant intercourse, by the means proposed, or any other, unless it were by posting a chain of sentinels at hailing distance along the whole line of the frontier from the Sabine to the shores of Lake Superior. The advocates of the new system of trade propose the expulsion of all the traders from the Indian country and the establishment by the Government of store-houses, (I will call them *factories*;) to which the Indians may come, and, if I understand the advocates of the plan, receive their annuities in



detail, according to the necessities (or caprices I will say) of the different individuals; and where they can be furnished with goods at cost and charges; by the Government, and find a market for their surplus produce for the supply of the military posts. Against this system would be immediately arrayed every regular trader now established under licences from the Government. They would establish their posts along the frontier, just within the limits of the State, bid defiance to your intercourse law, and despise that which, under existing regulations, they can be made to respect, to a certain extent; and the expenses of keeping up your factories would enable them to undersell the Government, and make some profit, provided the Indians continue to have any commodity for barter, and thus your establishments would fall into disrepute among them, without contributing anything to their benefit.

Instead of establishing this market for their surplus produce for the supply of our military posts, I would recommend, as much more congenial to their condition and habits, that there be deposited at each of these military posts a small quantity of corn and a few good blankets, furnished at the expense of the Government, and to be issued upon the representation or requisition of the agents, or at the discretion of the commanding officers, when circumstances seem to require it. By such an act of generosity on the part of the Government, hundreds of Indians would be relieved from extreme hunger, protected against the chilling blast, and the Government and all its officers charged with the management of Indians will be looked up to with gratitude as protectors and benefactors. And instead of wasting enormous sums of money for the erection of factories and the support of factors, sub-factors, interpreters, and laborers, in carrying out a system from which no good results would flow, a small portion of the funds required for it, judiciously applied in the manner suggested, would produce real and substantial benefits, and, instead of bringing the Government into contempt, (for such will always be the result of any system of trade it may undertake with the Indians,) it would engender a feeling of gratitude, confidence, and respect, and relieve, in many cases, the most bitter suffering.

These, sir, are my views upon the subject of your queries. To carry them into effect requires that the Indian agents should reside at their posts as required.

Heretofore it has not been possible for them to fulfil these requirements, for want of the means; and it is but lately they have been called upon for estimates for means to erect the necessary buildings. And it occurs to me that sub-agencies should be abolished; and wherever one exists whose duties can be performed by the adjoining agent, that they should be transferred to such agent; and where one is found necessary, that his pay should be increased to that of an agent. By this means, the duties and pay would be equalized, without, perhaps, any increase of the expenses of the department. The most scrupulous attention should be paid by the agents to a judicious application of all the means furnished, either by the bounty of the Government or under treaty stipulations for the benefit of the Indians: If the intercourse law of 1834 is insufficient to answer the purposes contemplated, let it be amended, and the agents should be clothed with power to execute it in a very summary manner.

So closely allied must be the duties of Indian agents with those of military officers commanding frontier posts; that they should, in my opinion, cooperate on all occasions requiring it, and where such co-operation would

not be incompatible with two distinct departments. The country must necessarily be under military authority, even in time of peace; and an agent may find it necessary to call to his aid the military in executing the law; for he could apply nowhere else in case of resistance. And, on the other hand, in case of any hostile movement on the part of the Indians, his knowledge of the topography of the country, the character and influence of particular Indians, and others who reside among them, and of the general feeling and disposition of the tribe, may render the agent eminently useful to an officer under such circumstances. If I be correct in this view of the subject, such co-operation would seem to be almost indispensable, which it appears to me can exist without any conflict between them in the discharge of the legitimate duties of either.

I am perhaps making suggestions not called for by your queries, but the efforts making to effect a great revolution in a system not fairly tried, must plead my apology for the exercise of such a privilege, and will, I hope, justify the gratuity. It is my firm conviction, that, if the measures proposed were carried into effect, the abuses so much complained of would soon cease to exist; regular traders would soon withdraw their establishments from the border tribes, for the reason that *furs and peltries* have almost disappeared; there would be no money to induce a continuance, and *traffic* would continue to exist only among a few individuals upon the frontier, who would soon be expelled by the more respectable and intelligent part of the community, unwilling as they will be to submit to the inconvenience arising from it. If not, so much the worse for the Indians. As respects a prohibition of intercourse between them and the whites, I will repeat, that it is not only impracticable, but utterly impossible, and that all the plans suggested for its accomplishment are wild and chimerical!

A request from another quarter induces me to make this communication the means of fulfilling it, and to that end I will make a few remarks respecting the unprotected state of the frontier, and the *cordon* of military posts proposed to be established, as well for the protection of our own citizens, as that of the emigrating Indians. In doing this it is not necessary to wander into the wilds of the Rocky mountains, and enumerate an hundred tribes and bands, from whom, in candor I must say, we have nothing to apprehend, but need only call your attention to the vast extent of frontier, from Fort Gibson, on the Arkansas, to Fort Snelling, on the St. Peter's, a distance of eight hundred miles at least, and to the fact that for its protection we have only a few dragoons, at Cantonment Leavenworth, without any work of defence whatever. Along this whole line of frontier, are located numerous tribes of restless Indians—I will not use a common phrase and say, within *striking distance of the frontier*—but actually within *shooting distance* of every man's door. It would be useless to mention the name, number, and local position, of each tribe. The subject is well understood by you. This state of things cannot exist long. Our exposed situation will invite aggression by some one of the tribes, and the example of one may be followed by others, perhaps by all. It is the natural disposition of savages to take advantage of weak and exposed situations. Let such an event happen to-morrow, and what would be the situation of this vast frontier? The events of the late and existing Indian wars furnish an appalling answer. The inhabitants of the frontier have a right to expect protection. They look for it with confidence, and it is hoped

they will not look in vain. Besides this, the emigrating Indians have claims equally strong.

It perhaps does not become me to say anything in relation to the points at which the fortifications proposed should be located, as there are now officers of the proper department occupied in surveying and examining the frontier, with a view to the selection of the proper positions. I will, however, venture to suggest, that they should all be constructed with an eye to permanency and durability, with the exception of that proposed on the waters of the *Des Moines*, between Council Bluffs and Fort Snelling; that should be temporary, as it must soon be embraced by the new State to be organized north of the State of Missouri, embracing all the country between the two rivers, as high, at least, as latitude 43. Whenever the limits of that State are defined, it will then be necessary to establish another permanent work on the Missouri, about one hundred and sixty miles above the river Platte, and thus will be completed the entire chain of defence, and a tier of States west of the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Peter's. To accelerate this event, the earliest opportunity should be embraced to remove the Sacs, Foxes, and Winnebagoes from that country to their place of destination, south of the Missouri river, where the great experiment for their permanent improvement may commence, and intrusion cease. The political reasons in support of this measure are of a character highly imposing, and should not be overlooked. The settlements of the Hudson's Bay Company, on North Red river, are daily gaining strength and influence; and, however we may *hope*, it cannot be expected that we shall *always* maintain our present relations with England. The communication between those Indians and the Red river colony is practicable and easy, and the distance inconsiderable; and in case of a rupture between the United States and England, what would be the consequence of the present local position of those Indians, our most active and inveterate enemies during the last war? The history of that war affords an answer. A position south of the Missouri, and the military posts suggested, would place them beyond the reach of foreign influence, and afford a permanent home, equally congenial to their habits, and our northern frontier would be left quiet and safe, under the worst of circumstances.

Very respectfully, sir,

I have the honor to be,

Your very obedient and humble servant,

JOSHUA PILCHER.

Hon. C. A. HARRIS,  
*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

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No. 8.

*Report of J. W. Edmonds, United States commissioner, upon the disturbance at the Potawatamie payment, September, 1836.*

NEW YORK, December 2, 1837.

SIR: By your letter of instructions to me of the 20th April last, I was directed to inquire into the cause and origin of the difficulty which occurred at the payment of the annuity to the Potawatamie Indians, in September, 1836, and its results; and particularly whether the officers connected with

your department had properly discharged their duty in the matter; and whether there was sufficient cause for calling out the troops.

Pursuant to these instructions, on my arrival at Logansport, Indiana, in May last, I entered on the duty committed to me, by informing Colonel Pepper of their nature, and submitting to his examination the papers which you had transmitted to me.

I gave to General Grover a copy of the communication of the chiefs, in which he was implicated.

I appointed the 13th of June as the day on which the investigation should commence, and gave public notice thereof in the newspaper, in which all persons conversant of the transaction were requested to give me all the information in their power.

I requested the assistance of T. A. Howard, Esq., attorney for the United States for that district, which was promptly and efficiently rendered.

The chiefs of the tribe were notified, and requested to attend.

A list of witnesses was prepared by General Howard, and I caused them to be summoned; and I announced that all persons implicated might appear before me, either in person or by their counsel, and examine and cross-examine the witnesses, and have such sworn on their part as they might deem expedient.

On the appointed day, I proceeded in the investigation.

Mr. Howard attended as counsel on the part of the investigation, and Messrs. S. S. Tipton, Cowdrey, and Dunn appeared as counsel for different persons implicated.

Some doubts having been suggested to me as the genuineness of the communication from the chiefs to the President, I commenced by first examining those of its signers who were present. Po-ka-gos and No-taw-ka denied that they signed the letter; We-wiss-ah signed it, because he was urged to do so by Ke-wa-na and Mes-wa-ky, and those two said they signed it because the others did. They said it was written by Colonel George W. Ewing, and interpreted to them by them Joseph Barron, the Government interpreter.

I then read the paper to them, paragraph by paragraph, and caused it to be interpreted to them by Luther Rice, whom I employed for that purpose, and who approved himself to be a capable and intelligent interpreter.

As each part was interpreted to the chiefs, I inquired of them whether they had said, or intended to say, as was written.

The particulars of this examination, and the answers of the chiefs, will appear on pages 7 to 13 inclusive, of the record of my proceedings herewith submitted. They disavowed some parts of the paper—those particularly which were calculated to be offensive to persons whose names were mentioned; but in the main they admitted that it correctly set forth that which they had intended to say, and that their object had been to tell the President what had occurred at the payment, and to “ask him to send one of his wise men to inquire into it.”

I then proceeded to take the testimony of witnesses, called by any of the parties. The testimony was taken publicly, and after being written down, was read over to the witnesses in public, corrected by them if they desired it, and then signed. All the testimony thus received is herewith submitted, and will be found on pages 14 to 94 inclusive, of the record of my proceedings. Various documents are also herewith submitted, either separately,

or as forming a part of that record, to which I shall have occasion hereafter to refer more particularly.

From these sources I draw the following conclusions, and in doing so, shall pursue the course indicated by General Howard, in his *programme*, which is hereto annexed.

1st. "*The difficulty at the payment, embracing the riot, or mob, with the attendant circumstances.*"

Before the payment of the annuity to the Indians, the chiefs had determined that the money should be paid to them, and some of them had requested Messrs. George W. Ewing and Cyrus Taber to assist them in counting and dividing it among themselves, and in paying their debts. After the payment to the chiefs, they and Messrs. Ewing and Taber, Joseph Barron, and some of the guard, (which the disbursing officers had employed) were assembled on the payment ground, with the money before them in a shanty, which had been used as the council house. In 1835 the Indians had adjusted the debts they then owed, and had promised to pay a part of them in 1836. The paper showing the amounts thus to be paid was in the hands of Colonel Pepper, who stood at the door of the council house, and called over the names on it. The persons thus called went into the building, and received their money. In this manner the sum of \$5,142 was paid to sundry claimants.

After those sums were paid, Col. Pepper retired; and Messrs. Ewing and Taber, in the presence of the chiefs, proceeded to make farther payments on claims against the Indians. They thus paid the following additional sums, viz: Luther Rice, \$200; Brewyett, \$75; Joseph Barron, \$8,000; Ewing, Walker, & Co., (a firm consisting of G. W. Ewing, W. G. Ewing, and G. B. Walker,) \$16,000; A. Hamilton and Cyrus Taber, \$8,000; E. V. Cicott, \$2,493, and Peter Barron, \$618. The firms of Ewing, Walker, & Co., and Hamilton Taber, were the largest claimants. The money of Ewing, Walker, & Co. was put aside in the council house, that of Hamilton & Co. was carried to Taber's quarters, and that of Barron to his quarters.

Before these payments commenced, a good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed by the other claimants at the selection of Messrs. Ewing and Taber to distribute the money. They were apprehensive that they would not receive their share, and the dissatisfaction was greatly increased by the payment of such large sums in the three instances named.

The first appearance of any violence, however, grew out of a personal altercation between Wm. G. Ewing and Alexander Coquillard; the former being a large claimant, and the latter avowing that he was no claimant, but was a friend of the Indians, and determined that they should not be cheated. Prior to and during this quarrel, Gen. Grever and some other claimants entered the council house, peaceably, and endeavored to have the payment of claims stopped until all should be presented and investigated or adjusted, but without success. Francis Comparet was one who made such an effort. Failing of success, he was vehement in his remonstrances, and was turned out of the council house by the guard. "Mr. Comparet made considerable noise," which added to the excitement. Mr. Eldridge, (former sheriff of Cass county, Indiana) ran up to Mr. Coquillard and said something to him, which none of the witnesses seemed to have heard, and then those two persons rushed towards the council house, accompanied by

a large crowd, some crying out—"Pull down the house," others saying, "No, No."

The guard were stationed in front of the house; but the crowd, although powerful enough to have borne down all their opposition, made no attempt to force themselves in. They hurried to the back of the building; and Coquillard attempted to get on its roof. Pierre Andre, the captain of the guard, pushed him off. In falling, he seized the butting pole of the house to save himself, but it fell with him. Andre threatened to blow out his brains if he repeated the attempt. He then went to Barron's house, which was close by, clambered on its roof, and made a speech in the French, English, and Indian languages. The crowd consisted of some 300 or 400 whites, and about as many Indians. Coquillard's speech is described as being inflammatory, and as having been interrupted by frequent exclamations of applause; and there was a general shout of assent at its termination.

It was urged to me that his object in getting on to the council house was to aid in, or effect its demolition; but the testimony is satisfactory that he was only desirous to obtain a conspicuous place from which to address the crowd. I am also satisfied there was no attempt to tear down the house; the butting pole was thrown down by accident, and the clapboards or peices that had been nailed over the crevices between the logs were torn off in order to enable people to see what was going on inside. The cry of "tear down the house" may have been intended as a feint to intimidate its inmates, or it may have truly expressed the feeling of some of the crowd. If the destruction of the house had been intended, it could easily have been done, for the power was with the crowd, and there was no force sufficient to stay them.

It was also urged that Coquillard, in his speech, endeavored to excite the Indians to acts of violence, and to kill the chiefs who had signed the treaty; and had attempted to alienate their affections from our Government by accusing the President and his officers of lying to them, and cheating them out of their lands. Upon this subject the testimony is contradictory. This view of it is supported by Col. Ewing, who says he made a memorandum of the speech at the time, and therefore is less likely to err in giving now the impressions which it then made upon him. Several other witnesses, however, in relating Coquillard's speech, do not agree in the statement that he abused the President or excited the Indians to kill the chiefs who had signed the treaty. It is, however, evident that he made his speech under great excitement, having come fresh from a violent quarrel with one of the claimants; that he was vehement in his manner; that he dwelt most upon topics which were irritating both to the whites and the Indians; and that his whole operations were calculated to produce excitement in the camp. His object, however, seems throughout to have been to protect the Indians from the frauds which he believed were about being practised upon them. Meritorious as this purpose may have been, there was great indiscretion exhibited in the means resorted to attain it. So great was the excitement, that all agree in the opinion that one blow struck would have led to a general fight and much bloodshed.

The disturbance broke up any farther distribution of the money by Messrs. Ewing and Taber. The latter retired to his house, and having learned that some one of the crowd had threatened him personally, he armed himself. The sons of Barron prepared to defend the money taken

by their father, and Colonel Ewing remained in the council house with the chiefs, determined to defend his possession.

Coquillard's speech was followed by one from Shadrina, a half-breed, who was intoxicated, and who, at Coquillard's request, interpreted to the Indians what he had said. Speeches were also made from the house-top by General Grover, C. Carter, (postmaster at Logansport,) Allan Hamilton, Wm. G. Ewing, and Colonel Pepper. General Grover insisted that the proceedings of Ewing and Taber, in distributing the money, should be stopped; that the money already paid should be returned, and none paid out until all the claims were presented. Mr. Carter's speech was to the same purpose, and he proposed an investigation of the claims. Mr. Hamilton proposed that the money should be returned, and Mr. Ewing avowed his willingness to have his claims investigated. All attempted to allay the excitement and prevent violence. Some proposed that Colonel Pepper should investigate the claims. Others, that he and the disbursing officer should do so. To these propositions, those gentlemen would not assent. Mr. Carter then proposed that they should appoint five persons to discharge that duty. This was assented to on all hands; Colonel Pepper resting his assent upon that of the Indians.

This proposition, and that of Mr. Hamilton to return the money, allayed the excitement, and the crowd dispersed. Mr. Hamilton immediately returned the money which he was to return. General Grover and some others proceeded to Barron's house to superintend the return of his money. His sons first attempted to resist, but upon being threatened with having their house torn down about their ears, they gave it up; and it was then discovered that he had taken \$2,000 more than the chiefs and Messrs. Ewing and Taber had set apart for him. Colonel Ewing's money was taken by the guard and put into the general pile, and the whole was then put under the care of the agent.

Colonel Pepper was at dinner when the disturbance began. He immediately went to the council house, and as soon as he could obtain a hearing, he addressed the crowd. He asserted the right of the Indians to do what they pleased with their money, and said they should be protected in the exercise of that right. He endeavored to allay the excitement, and conducted himself throughout with the discretion and energy becoming his station and the occasion.

This was the disturbance as it occurred on that day. It was not, thus far, attended with any other consequences than those designed, viz: breaking up the proceedings of Messrs. Ewing and Taber, and the return of a portion of the money paid out by them. The high state of excitement, however, which existed in the camp, and the fact that the Indians were armed with their knives, and the whites with clubs and sticks, might have rendered the consequences more serious if it had not been for the efforts of Colonel Pepper, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Carter, and others.

### 2d. *"The cause and origin of that difficulty."*

Excitement existed both among the Indians and the whites, but produced by different causes.

About fifty Indians of the St. Joseph or Chicago agency, accompanied by their chief, came down to the payment, and encamped in a body about two miles off. Their object was to receive a share of the payment, and some

of the Wabash Potawatamies desired they should do so. The chiefs, however, in council, determined that this should not be done, and Colonel Pepper avowed his intention of carrying that resolution into effect. This created much dissatisfaction among those northern Indians and their friends, so much so as to induce them to leave the council called by the agent, in a tumultuous and insulting manner, and to threaten to fight with the chiefs who had denied them.

By the treaty of 27th October, 1832, certain reservations of land were made for particular chiefs and their bands; among others, ten sections to the band of Che-chaw-kose, and sixteen sections to that of Ash-kum and Wee-si-o-nas. Colonel Pepper was instructed to treat for the purchase of all those reservations remaining unsold. Ash-kum and Che-chaw-kose refused to treat. Colonel Pepper then avowed his intention of treating with the proper chiefs of the whole nation for the cession of those reservations, and he did so. The treaty of the 23d of September, 1836, was that which he thus made, to which neither Ash-kum nor Che-chaw-kose, nor any of their bands, were parties.

This, as might have been expected, produced great excitement in those two chiefs and their bands. They denied the right of the chiefs of the nation to sell their particular reservations without their consent. They remonstrated against the treaty thus made, and insisted that it should be broke. They appealed to a letter from Governor Cass, which they had, as evidence of their right to a separate and exclusive enjoyment of their particular reservations; and they repeatedly threatened the lives of the chiefs who had thus assumed to cede their lands.

The disturbance which I have described occurred on Sunday, the 25th September. This treaty was made on Friday the 23d, and became publicly known on Saturday the 24th.

The Indians, whose dissatisfaction was produced by these two causes, numbered about 300 in camp, as many as, if not more than, those who were friendly.

The state of feeling among them was known on Sunday, and both Coquillard and Shadrina alluded to this subject in their speeches on that day. Their appeals seemed to meet with a ready response from the Indians, who were mingled with the whites in the crowd.

The excitement among the white people was produced by a different cause. Almost all of them were claimants against the Indians. The claims amounted to nearly double the sum which the Indians were to receive. One of the witnesses described the whites as composing "two parties on the ground; one consisted of those who had the money, and the other of those who wanted it, and the latter was the strongest." The officers of Government stood aloof from both.

The Indians received \$63,000. Of this, they set apart \$16,000 for themselves, and appropriated \$47,000 to the payment of their debts. The chiefs, and their friends, Messrs. Ewing and Taber, had already paid out to three persons \$32,000; leaving only \$15,000 for distribution among the other claimants. It seemed to be generally understood among the claimants, that no debts (excepting only those adjusted in 1835) should be paid until all the claims should be presented, so that all should have an equal chance. On the contrary, the payment of new claims commenced without waiting for the presentation of all of them. The remonstrances of the other claimants were disregarded; one of them was ejected by violence from the



room. And the payment went on with a liberal hand to those who were permitted to remain inside. Hence the excitement among the white people.

Their object seemed to be solely to arrest these proceedings, and bring about a more equitable distribution of the money. None of the claimants alluded to the topic which had produced the excitement among the Indians. And as soon as the money was returned, and it was determined to appoint other men to pay it out after receiving all the claims, the excitement among them subsided, and the disturbance, so far as they were concerned, ended.

It is, however, contended that the disturbance was the result of preconcert among some of the leaders. This allegation is based upon the evidence of Samuel D. Taber, "that Grover and Coquillard appeared very much enraged that claims were to be paid, which ought not to be; and the latter said, before that should be done, he would tear down the house and give the money to the Indians. Carter told him to stick to that, and Grover said they would make Coquillard foreman, and the three then went off together; that Elridge said they would have had a disturbance before, if they could have got any body to talk Indian; as soon as Coquillard came, they went ahead."

I cannot learn from the testimony that Mr. Carter did anything more in the disturbance than to make the proposition, which was finally acceded to, and quieted the excitement. The other three gentlemen were active in leading on the crowd. But I am not satisfied that they intended any violence. They talked loud and made a great noise, but committed no further violence.

### 3. "Its results, and particularly as to the conduct of the officers," &c.

One result was, that part of the money of the Indians was missing, and never accounted for. They received \$63,000. Of this, \$472 was paid for depredations, \$12,328 was paid by Messrs. Ewing and Taber, and not returned, \$16,000 was paid by the new commissioners to the Indians, \$32,832 to the claimants, and \$128 00 for their services and expenses; making a total of \$61,760, and showing a deficiency of \$1,240. I cannot, with all my inquiries, ascertain what became of that sum. It was probably extracted from the mass during the disturbance; but by whom I cannot even conjecture. It seems to have been lost to the Indians at all events.

Another result was, that when it became necessary to have a guard, it was no longer discreet for Colonel Pepper to rely upon the assistance of the white people on the ground; for most of them had been engaged in the disturbance, and some of his guard had abandoned their post, and made common cause with the people. He was, therefore, obliged to resort elsewhere for a force which, under other circumstances, he might have obtained on the spot.

Another result was, an entirely different distribution of the money. On Monday morning, Colonel Pepper announced the appointment of Ebenezer Ward, William Polke, R. B. Stevenson, S. B. Barthelet, and E. V. Cicott. This appointment was very judicious. They were gentlemen of high character in the community, and discharged their duty with fidelity and scrupulous integrity. There is no foundation whatever for the charges of mal-conduct against them, which are contained in the letter from the chiefs. If they paid any false claims, it was because they had neither the time nor the opportunity of investigation. And in every instance where either of

them was interested in the claim presented, he was careful to abstain from acting upon it. They rejected some claims, and upon all that were allowed they paid something.

Another result is so intimately connected with calling out the troops, that it will be considered hereafter.

I felt myself especially required to investigate the conduct of the officers of Government in these transactions.

The conduct of Barron, the interpreter, in taking \$2,000 more than was allotted to him, was without excuse.

The chiefs deny that they intended to make any charge against Colonel Pepper; but there are some implied in their letter to the President. These are, however, complaints that he had not remained among them as long as they deemed it necessary. He did remain as long as there was any real necessity for his doing so, and then he was called away by other and equally pressing official duties.

It may also be, as the chiefs and Mr. Coquillard seemed to suppose, that if he had undertaken the task of distribution, there would not have been any disturbance. But that was not within the scope of his official duties, and his predecessor had incurred some censure from having, on previous occasions, undertaken it.

"4th. *Was it (the disturbance) such as to justify calling out the troops?*"

The state of feeling among a portion of the Indians, on Sunday, has already been adverted to. On the evening of that day, Colonel Pepper held a council with the chiefs, to select the new commissioners. Ashkum, and others of the disaffected Indians, intruded themselves rudely upon that council, and broke it up.

At the execution of the treaty of the 23d September, the chiefs who signed it, expressed their fears that their lives would be endangered if they did so. Colonel Pepper promised them his protection. After the execution of the treaty, he was informed that the dissatisfied Indians had held a council, and determined to kill all who had signed the treaty; and the feeling which existed among them was apparent to him as early as Sunday morning. After the council was thus disturbed on Sunday evening, the chiefs who had signed the treaty called upon him, told him their lives were threatened, and claimed his protection as he had promised them. At this time there were many in the camp, both Indians and whites, who were intoxicated, and these chiefs armed themselves with knives and pistols.

There were no Government troops nearer than Chicago, and they could not have been procured in less than five or six days' time. It was not to be expected; under the circumstances, that the agent would attempt to organize a force among those whites who were in the camp, and who had, most of them, been engaged in scenes which encouraged, if it did not engender, the bad feeling among the Indians. He had no alternative but to call upon the militia; and he did so by a requisition upon Colonel Ewing, a copy of which will be found in the record of my proceedings. This was issued on Sunday evening, and the troops arrived in the neighborhood on Monday afternoon.

Apprehensions of further disturbance continued on Monday, and it was the opinion of the most candid and dispassionate among the witnesses, that

in consequence of the excitement during that day, no distribution of the money could have taken place without the aid of troops; and that opinion was repeatedly expressed to Colonel Pepper. In the course of that day, Ashkunt and an Ildian named Ship she-wa-eno, made some speeches to an assemblage of about 200 Indians, in which they were very abusive to Col. Pepper and insulting to the chiefs who had signed the treaty, daring them to come out of doors, telling them they were not chiefs, &c.

The conduct of this chief and his party, on this occasion and on Sunday evening, was the natural consequence of the previous disturbance. They would not have ventured upon it, if the example had not been set them the day before; if they had not looked for countenance among the white people, and had not discovered the want of power in the agent to control either the whites or Indians.

On the same day Coquillard went into the woods, and made a speech to 40 or 50 Indians, in which he accused the Ewings of attempting to cheat them. Colonel Pepper hearing of this, went to the place, and forbid Coquillard from going any farther, and he desisted.

In the course of that afternoon, the news reached the camp that troops had arrived in the vicinity. The excitement became immediately very great. The people rushed towards the lodge, in which was Colonel Pepper with the money. He met them at the door, and by his resolution and energy prevented any farther disturbance there. The camp was in great confusion. Some abused the Colonel; others talked of preparing to meet the troops; but nothing more than noise happened.

The next day the troops arrived at the camp. The money was put into the possession of Mr. Ward and his associates, and the troops under their orders; and then, without any farther molestation, the task of distribution was completed.

Those commissioners made to me a report of their proceedings, which is herewith transmitted. The troops were on duty for several days, and, accompanying the evidence, will be found sundry documents showing the particulars of their service.

It might have been that the money could have been distributed, and the chiefs protected against the threatened violence, without any resort to an armed force. But there was too much excitement and well-grounded apprehension of violence, to justify an experiment which, if unsuccessful, would have been attended with disastrous and fatal consequences. And, in my opinion, Col. Pepper was required, by the obligations of his office, to call around him such a force as would cause his station, as the representative of the Government, to be properly respected, and would enable him to afford to the chiefs that protection which they had, under the circumstances, a right to require at his hands.

During the investigation before me there was some conflicting testimony, and some imputations upon individuals, which induced me to announce, at the close of the testimony, that I would receive any written communications upon the subject from any person who might choose to make them.

In consequence of this announcement, I received the letters hereto annexed, from M. Coquillard, E. V. Cicott, G. W. Ewing, Joseph Barron, and Peter Barron. I do not know that I am called upon to take any farther notice of the three former. The two latter are from two of the witnesses to the letter of the chiefs to the President, and they aver that the letter in my possession is different from that which they signed.

Having received only a copy from your department, in consequence of these letters I applied to you, as you are aware, for the original. Upon receiving it, I discovered at once, from an inspection of the paper, that the whole of its signatures of chiefs and witnesses, was all in the same handwriting, and therefore color was given to the assertion of the Messrs. Barron. I then applied to Col. Ewing for the original, by letter, a copy of which is annexed. He promptly furnished it to me, and I herewith transmit it to you. It will be seen, on examination, that though it differs, in some respects, from that on your files, the difference is not very material, and does not exist in those points in which the Barrons suppose it did.

Your instructions direct me to report to your office all the facts which shall be elicited by my investigation, together with my opinion whether any, and if any, what farther action, is necessary on the part of your department. I hope I shall be pardoned for taking in my answer a wider range than may appear to be strictly necessary.

In regard to the conduct of Barron, the interpreter, I must beg leave, before your department shall arrive at an opinion, to refer you to my report in some of the debt cases, and particularly in his own case, No. 17, and to his letter to me of the 19th of June, which is herewith transmitted.

I am not aware that it will be necessary for your department to take any measures, even if any should be deemed proper, in reference to the conduct of the parties engaged in the disturbance. An indictment has been preferred, in the State courts of Indiana, against Coquillard, Grover, Eldridge, Comparet, Shadrina, and Carter, for a riot; and that tribunal is competent to try and to punish, if justice shall require it. A copy of the indictment is herewith transmitted.

By referring to a letter from Gen. Howard, a copy of which will be found on page 103 of the record of my proceedings, it will be seen that Colonel Ewing preferred a complaint against Coquillard, and others, for a violation of the laws of Congress, and that Col. Pepper addressed a communication to the United States district judge upon the subject. In consequence of the latter, a grand jury was summoned, and the matter submitted to them. They found "that the breaches of law complained of, referred themselves for adjudication and punishment to the laws of the State of Indiana, and the courts thereof," but they expressed an opinion that Coquillard and Shadrina had violated the 13th section, and the latter clause of the 15th section of the act of Congress of the 30th June, 1834.

It is proper, therefore, as suggested by Gen. Howard, that I should express an opinion whether the latter part of this finding of the grand jury is correct. The district attorney certainly acted with propriety in deferring the commencement of prosecutions for the penalties prescribed by those sections. He was not bound by that finding, yet it would have afforded him a good excuse for commencing suits. But it was altogether most discreet to wait until all the facts should be fully developed.

I have already adverted to the discrepancies in the testimony in reference to the speeches of Coquillard and Shadrina. It is stated most strongly against them in the testimony of Col. Ewing, (page 70.) Even if we should consider that as the correct version, there will not, I think, be found enough to justify the finding of the grand jury.

This is a penal law, and is to be strictly construed. The 13th section renders it penal to send any talk, speech, &c., with intent to produce a contravention or infraction of a treaty, &c., or to disturb the peace, &c.

Now, this cannot properly be construed to relate to a speech or talk orally delivered by its author, but only to one *sent* by its author through some other channel than a personal delivery. The next (the 14th) section strengthens this view, for it inflicts a penalty upon any person who shall *deliver* any such talk, &c., *to or from* any Indian nation, &c., *from or to* any subject, citizen, &c.; clearly contemplating only a case of a speech or talk *sent* from one person to another by a third. This was not the case with Coquillard and Shadrina. They delivered their own speeches, and did not send them by a third person. Although as much mischief may be done in the one way as the other, and a penal provision be equally necessary in both cases, that will afford no good reason for extending the operation of the statute to cases not strictly within its letter.

The latter clause of the 15th section renders it penal for any person to alienate, or attempt to alienate, the confidence of any Indian or Indians *from the Government of the United States*. If we still continue to take the view of their speeches which Col. Ewing gives, we shall not, I apprehend, be able to find anything in them which would subject Coquillard and Shadrina to the penalty prescribed in this section. The utmost that they said, was accusing the agent of having cheated the Indians, advising them to disavow the treaty and require it to be broken, and charging the agent or the President (which of them is uncertain) with having lied to them. All this may have had a tendency to alienate the confidence of the Indians from the agent, but the alienation of their confidence from the Government would not necessarily ensue. The speeches were consistent with the entire confidence of the Indians that the Government would break an unjust treaty, and protect them against the deceptions of which they complained, and may have contemplated an appeal to the justice of Government for that purpose. It is true, the speakers may have intended to effect their object by a resort to violence. But in the absence of testimony, we are not at liberty to presume, in order to bring them within the provisions of a penal statute, that their intentions were unlawful. On the other hand, it is our duty to presume that their intentions were lawful, until the contrary is proved. No such proof was given in the case, and I am of opinion that the grand jury erred.

I have carefully examined the act of Congress, for a prohibition against any person's making a speech, or any other direct and personal effort to alienate the affections of the Indians from our Government, or to disturb our peace or tranquillity. I have searched in vain. Such a provision seems necessary; for surely as much injury can be done by personally making a speech as by its transmission through a third person.

This is not, however, the only reform which suggests itself to me as proper to be adopted.

Difficulties like those which occurred in Indiana, or occurrences of a character equally destructive to the morals and happiness of the Indians, must, more or less, necessarily grow out of the present mode of paying their annuities. A whole nation or tribe is assembled at one place. The annuity is paid in coin, and is appropriated by the Indians either in the purchase of articles at the time, or in payment of debts contracted at prior purchases. Some of these articles are necessary, many are unnecessary, and some are positively injurious. The traders are naturally anxious to obtain this money; not without an equivalent, it is true, but an equivalent in which their interest is regarded rather than that of the Indian. Hence the traders pre-

pare for the payment, and proceed to the camp with the materials for trade; and they are induced to carry into the Indian country, and spread before the Indians, the temptation to indulge in practices both physically and morally injurious.

It is in vain that the payment may be appointed far in the interior, and at a distance from the trading posts.

It is soon ascertained that whiskey can be transported wherever specie can, and the one follows the other with a true and certain scent.

The evils arising from this practice are manifold.

Much time is occupied in travelling to and from the payment, and the Indians are consequently often absent from their hunts or their corn-fields for three or four weeks of their most valuable time.

Many white men and half-breeds are in the habit of attending; some from curiosity or amusement, and some for the purpose of sharing in the annuity, by enrolling themselves or their families in the tribe by their Indian names. Among these, it is not uncommon for scenes of debauchery and intoxication to ensue, which at least has the effect of rendering the task of keeping the Indians in proper bounds rather difficult.

The proneness of the Indians to indulge in intoxication is not always controllable, and it is frequently impracticable for the officers of Government to procure their abstinence even until their business shall be completed. The hope of gain overcomes the fear of the penalties of the law. A military force cannot always be procured. A guard organized from the inhabitants of the camp, cannot, as was evident in Indiana, be always relied upon. And without a physical force to destroy or take possession of the liquor, the traders and Indians will both yield to the temptations before them. If the officers of Government are able to preserve order during their sojourn in camp, the traders and Indians remain after their departure. All restraint is then thrown off; and the whole camp, men, women, and children, will exhibit a disgusting spectacle of intoxication; the money of the Indians be wasted and gone in a few hours; not uncommonly fights and murders occur, and the Indian returns from his payment almost as poor as when he went, and certainly injured by the debauchery in which he has been engaged, and the examples which have been set before him.

I am not dealing in exaggeration. I am describing what I have seen, and what has been disclosed to me in my investigations. By referring to the particular case of the Potawatamies, it will be observed that there were several grog-shops in the camp; that whites and Indians were both intoxicated; that liquor had much to do in producing the necessity for the interposition of an armed force; and that the excitement among the Indians was rendered alarming by their intoxication.

The effect thus produced upon the moral habits of the Indians is not the only evil they sustain from this practice. By means of their annuities, they acquire a credit with the traders which is injurious to them. When in want of any article, instead of relying upon their skill in hunting, or their industry in their cornfields or their rice grounds, they rely upon this credit, and buy at a price greatly increased by their ignorance, and the risk and delay in payment. Proper incentives to industry are thus destroyed, and they are encouraged in the habits of idleness and improvidence to which they are ever prone, and which are the most formidable obstacles to their civilization and moral improvement.

The community of property generally existing among them, and which

operates to discourage their industry, is increased by the present mode of paying their annuities. The debts which they contract are frequently paid out of the common stock of the whole tribe, the debts of individuals being thus converted into claims against the whole nation. The indebted Indian is not required to pay his debt out of his share of the annuity. This arises from their inability to compute or understand the accounts against them or to make distribution of their money, and from the importunity of their creditors, who find their interest in checking discrimination. The effect, however, upon the Indians is most injurious. The more each runs in debt, the greater is the share which he obtains of the common fund. The industrious and economical fare worse than do the idle and extravagant; and a struggle is very naturally produced among them, which shall least practise the virtues which are so essential to the improvement of their condition.

This is strongly exemplified among the Potawamies of the Wabash. By pursuing this course they have become so involved in debt, that the price of their whole domain, although liberal, cannot extricate them; and the habits of idleness, improvidence, and intoxication, thus produced among them, render the entire extinction of this portion of a once powerful nation, an event that must be regarded as both speedy and certain, unless a new state of things shall dawn upon them.

Beyond the benefits resulting to the traders from this practice I know of but one argument in favor of its continuance; it is, perhaps, the cheapest mode in which we can pay Indian annuities. But I will not believe that this consideration will have any weight with our Government, when it is recollected that our mistimed economy is inflicting serious and lasting evils upon those whom we are in the habit of treating as *inops consilii*, as wards committed to our guardian care, whose welfare we are bound to regard by every consideration of justice and humanity.

The most effectual remedy for these evils will be to pay the annuities in goods and provisions.

The first effect of this change will be, to destroy the worst part of the Indian trade. The traders do not wish for goods in exchange for their commodities. Their object, mainly, is to obtain money or furs. Their trade being confined principally to the latter, they would not have the same inducement to attend the Indian payments with large stocks of goods and liquor. The Indians, for the purchase of such articles as they would require, would be compelled to rely upon their success in hunting or cultivating the ground. They would thus be incited to be industrious, skillful, and economical; and the traders would no longer find it to their interest to hold out to them temptations to be otherwise; and the influence of the traders growing out of the frequency of their intercourse, and which is naturally exercised rather for their own benefit than that of the Indians, would be materially impaired.

That influence is already sufficiently strong to enable the traders, if they should see fit to exercise it, to thwart any measures depending upon the assent of the Indians which Government might adopt for their improvement. They are in the frequent habit of conferring favors upon the Indians, sometimes without the hope of remuneration, and to afford relief from acute suffering and pressing want; sometimes with an expectation of return, rendered uncertain by a dependence not only upon the will, but the ability of the obliged party. As there is no obligation which has more binding force with an Indian, than that of making a suitable return for favors bestowed,

so no influence over them is stronger than that which is founded on this basis, and none that is more powerful, for good or ill, as it may chance to be exerted.

The goods, if judiciously purchased, could be supplied by Government at a much cheaper rate than by the retail trade of the Indian country; or, to express it more properly, the Indians would receive more goods for the same money. Confined to articles of necessity, such as clothing, provisions, and implements for hunting and farming, and the like; they would furnish much more extensive relief from that pinching want which is the frequent consequence of their uncontrollable love of finery and strong drinks.

This measure, therefore, while it will curtail the means and inducements for intemperate indulgence, will increase the supply for actual necessities. I know, however, that it is frequently said, that it will compel the Indians to receive articles which they do not want. This surely cannot be considered an insuperable objection, until it shall be shown to be impracticable for the Indians to communicate their wants to the officers of Government, or for those officers to ascertain what articles are suitable to their condition; a matter, one would suppose, of not more difficult attainment to a Government officer than to an Indian trader.

The mere fact of paying annuities in goods, will not alone produce all the benefits to be desired, although it will materially approximate to that result. The habitual improvidence of the Indians may frequently induce them, when they have on hand more goods or provisions than is required by their immediate wants, to barter them away for injurious commodities, at so great a sacrifice as to render the trade, even in that form, profitable to the white man. This will be more particularly the case if they are congregated in such large numbers as to create a business extensive enough to compensate the trader for his risk, time, and expense of transportation.

To prevent this, and render the system complete, it would be necessary to abolish the present practice of calling a whole nation or tribe together, and paying a whole year's annuity at one time; but in lieu of that, pay them by separate bands, villages, or small parties; divide the annuity in two or more payments, to be made at different periods in the year; and in all cases have it distributed by the Government officers, among heads of families or individuals, and not paid in mass.

It is this feature in the proposed reform which will increase the duties of your subordinates, and may increase the expense to Government; but the advantages to the Indians must be manifest to every one acquainted with the subject.

In those cases where, in consequence of treaty stipulations, or from other causes, annuities can be paid only in specie, many of the evils of which I have spoken would be remedied or ameliorated by making the payments to small bands or villages, rather than to the whole nation, and at several periods in the year; and in all cases let each family have its share. The advantage of each of these measures has already been pointed out, among which, the encouragement which would thus be given to a separate ownership of property, would not be the least.

I am aware that it may be said that the Indians have recently, by refusing to accept their annuities in goods, evinced their opposition to the course I suggest. But I am also aware that these refusals have frequently been prompted by other considerations than the advancement of the true interest of the Indians, and have as frequently been made in utter ignorance of the



fact, that they would have been materially benefitted by acceptance. I too fully appreciate the operating influence, to accord to that refusal all the weight to which, under other circumstances, it might be entitled.

The plan, therefore, which I suggest, will, in my opinion, be attended with these great advantages: it will avoid the debauchery and intoxication so frequently exhibited at Indian payments; will remove the temptations which are now so freely placed before the Indians; will extend their annuities in value; will teach them a separation instead of a community of property; will encourage economy and industry, and discourage their opposites; and will impair an influence over them which can frequently be exercised to their injury.

Thoroughly convinced, by observation and my investigations, of the justice and humanity of the measures which I have taken the liberty to suggest, I have felt it a duty to submit them to your consideration, in the hope that by their adoption much may be done to improve the condition of the Indians, and their certain destruction be at least impeded, if it cannot be entirely arrested.

I am, sir,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

J. W. EDMONDS,

*U. S. Commissioner &c.*

HON. C. A. HARRIS,

*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

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*Programme of General Howard.*

LOGANSPORT, INDIANA,

*Tuesday morning, June 13, 1836.*

In the investigation of certain matters (connected with the Indian payment, in the county of Fuller, in September last) before the commissioner, J. W. Edmonds, Esq., under instructions from the War Department, I propose to offer testimony upon the following subjects of inquiry, in the order in which they are stated, to wit:

1st. The difficulty at the payment, embracing the riot or mob, with the attendant circumstances.

2d. The cause and origin of that difficulty.

3d. Its results, and particularly as to the conduct of the officers, &c.

4th. Was it such as to justify calling out the troops?

These points of inquiry, it is believed, comprehend the matters indicated in that part of the instructions to which my attention has been directed by the commissioner.

T. A. HOWARD,

*United States Attorney, Indiana District.*

*Requisition of Commissioners.*

SEPTEMBER 29, 1836.

You will please retain the troops here to protect us and the chiefs of the Potawatamies, in his discharge of our duty as commissioners to investigate claims in favor of the whites, against said Potawatamies.

WM. POLKE,  
E. V. CICOTT,  
R. B. STEVENSON,  
D. D. PRATT.

To Col. A. C. PEPPER.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1836.

We, the undersigned, with feeling safe to discharge the duty involved upon us by the chiefs of the Wabash Potawatamies, through their father, Colonel A. C. Pepper, Indian agent, suggest the propriety of Colonel Pepper's sending for the troops at Rochester, to protect us and the chiefs in the distribution of their annuity; and also, to accompany the money left to pay their just debts to Judge Polke, if required; and also to prevent all violations of the laws of the State.

EBENEZER WARD,  
*President of the Board.*

P. S.—We further request Colonel A. C. Pepper to lead the troops to this camp.

*Report of the Commissioners of 1836.*

JUNE 8, 1837.

SIR: The undersigned, commissioners appointed by Colonel Pepper, Indian agent, and Captain Simonton, dishursing agent, at the request of the Potawatamie chiefs, in September, 1836, to divide and distribute a portion of their money to the heads of families, and to divide the residue among the claimants against the Potawatamies of the Wabash, beg leave respectfully to submit the following report:

Under the peculiar circumstances existing at the time, owing to the great number of claimants and others attending the payment, and the difficulty of procuring subsistence in the neighborhood, together with the impatience of the Indians and claimants themselves, it was found impracticable to enter into any accurate investigation of claims presented against the Indians. The undersigned, by one of their colleagues, namely, William Polke, Esq., proclaimed to the people or claimants that they would endeavor to pay no claims that were not just; but should they, through mistake, pay any one more than should thereafter, upon an investigation, appear to be just, the claimants would be required to pay them back; and further, that the undersigned would recommend to the Secretary of War the propriety and necessity of instituting an investigation, by the appointment of a com-

missioner for that purpose, of all the claims against the aforesaid tribe of Indians. That the undersigned, believing such a commissioner would be appointed, and that upon this condition being verbally expressed and understood, the claimants herewith presented were handed in and filed, and afterwards handed back to the owners.

We beg leave to submit to your honor that, agreeable to the request of the chiefs, we paid of the money that was placed in our care, to themselves and to the heads of families, as they directed, sixteen thousand dollars; and the remainder, thirty-two thousand nine hundred and sixty dollars, as follows, to wit:

To different claimants, as per vouchers, thirty-two thousand eight hundred and thirty-two dollars, and for conveying the same from payment ground to Judge Polke, by two teams, fourteen dollars, (receipts;) also paid Cyrus Vigus and Moses H. Scott, for assisting in counting the money, five dollars each. Also paid Judge Polke, for sundry accommodations in transacting our business, sixteen dollars; and also paid Mr. Rice, our interpreter, six dollars; and to M. B. Brouillet, Esq., four dollars; and the commissioners sixteen dollars each; making ninety-six dollars. Amounting in all, that we paid, to the sum of forty eight thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight dollars.

The foregoing being the full amount of money that came into the hands of the commissioners on the 28th of September, 1836.

EBENEZER WARD,  
WM. POLKE,  
L. B. BERTHELET,  
B. B. STEVENSON,  
*Commissioners.*

To J. W. EDMONDS, Esq.,  
*Commissioner United States.*

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*Letter of Alexis Coquillard.*

LOGANSPORT, June 22, 1837.

SIR: An opportunity having been offered to myself, with others, to present you a statement in writing explanatory and in justification of my conduct at the payment of the annuity to the Wabash Potawatamies on the Tippecanoe river in the fall of 1836, as also in other matters connected therewith. I beg leave to trouble you with the following. I first commenced trading with the Potawatamie Indians in the year 1817, on the Little St. Joseph's river, about forty miles distant from Fort Wayne, and continued there part of the time trading for myself, and part of the time as agent or clerk of J. E. Swartz; at the expiration of which time I formed a co-partnership with Francis Comparet, and removed to Fort Wayne, where I continued trading with said Indians until 1835, embracing a period of near fourteen years. My partner resided during this period at Fort Wayne. During the three or four first years in which we traded as co-partners, we had an annual stock of goods amounting to from five thousand to ten thousand dollars. During the remainder of the time, we had annually a stock of between twenty-five and thirty thousand dollars; and I do not now remember that in any one year during that whole period we did or could have credit-

ed to the Indians more than six thousand dollars. This arose not from our unwillingness to credit them for goods, but from the fears which they entertained, and often expressed, that they would not be able to pay for them. It would be proper for me here to remark, that during the greater part of the time I was trading with them they owned almost the whole of that portion of the State of Indiana lying north of the Wabash river. In the year 1832, on the Tippecanoe river, and in 1833, at Chicago, I had a final settlement with the Wabash Indians, and received my last payment in 1835. In September, 1836, a short time prior to the payment of the annuity to the Wabash Potawatamies of that year, private business called me to Fort Wayne and Wabash Town. On my return home, other private business required my presence at Rochester, a small town about four miles distant from the spot that had been selected as the payment ground for the payment of the annuity last mentioned. While there, I was called upon by several of my friends to go to the payment ground; and, after some persuasion and statements on their part, all my friends, some Indians among the number, wished very much that I would come. I consented and did go. In order the better to explain the course then pursued by myself, I must ask you to go back to the year 1819, at which time I at first became acquainted with the Messrs. Ewing. In the year 1822, I think, the father of the Messrs. Ewing had a small trading establishment; but Mr. G. W. Ewing and Mr. Wm. G. Ewing did not commence trading until in 1826, or 1827, at which time they purchased a small stock of goods in Detroit. They located themselves at Fort Wayne, and traded with Miami and Potawatamie Indians indiscriminately. They continued at Fort Wayne until 1828, or 1829, at which time Mr. George W. Ewing removed to Logansport, where he now resides. From my acquaintance with the men, I have found them to be designing, intriguing men, seeking a fortune (for they like myself were poor when they commenced business) with a determination to get it, as they have often said to myself and others; by whatever means they could obtain it. Showing this to be their character, I have always thought them capable of doing any act, however mean or dishonorable. When, therefore, I arrived at Rochester and the payment ground, as above stated, I was not a little surprised to find that they (the Ewings) had presented a claim of \$32,000 against the Indians. I say I was not a little surprised; for, notwithstanding I thought them capable, as above remarked, of doing almost anything for the sake of money, yet I did not think they could have the effrontery to bring a claim of that amount for goods sold in the course of one year; and that, too, against the Wabash Potawatamie tribe, which does not exceed one thousand in number. In 1835 they had a final settlement with the Indians, and were allowed the sum of \$8,000, at which time they received \$5,000, and were to get the remainder in 1836, which they did. When they were allowed that sum, they said to many persons, and to the Indians themselves, that that was the whole of the claim they then had against said Indians; and when we add to this the fact that they have purchased from these same Indians nearly 3,000 acres of land, besides the great amount of land which they have purchased from other persons; that they only commenced business about ten years since, and that, too, when poor; and that they never, at any one year, purchased more than \$40,000 worth of goods to supply a large store at Fort Wayne, where they also traded largely with the white population; a large store at Logansport, where they also sold largely to the whites, besides a large number of small establishments elsewhere.

I think you must yourself be surprised. I would here beg leave to remark, that from my intimate knowledge of the Potawatamie Indians, their character and language, I can state, without fear of contradiction, that there is no race of beings who can so easily be made the dupes of designing men. They are a simple, confiding people; and when they have confidence in any person, that person can persuade them to sign any paper, and do almost any act. This remark is particularly applicable to the Messrs. Ewing; being endowed with considerable natural ability and sprightliness, possessing gentlemanly and easy manners, with the disposition I have before mentioned, they are the men of all others most likely and able to deceive and lead away persons so ignorant and credulous as the Wabash Potawatamies. I found a great excitement among the white people, as also among the Indians. That among the whites was occasioned by the unusual amount claimed by the Messrs. Ewing, and also from the fact, that Mr. G. W. Ewing and Cyrus Tubor had been selected to pay the claims. That among the Indians was occasioned from the fact, that the head chiefs of the nation had sold reservations that had been given to bands without consulting the chiefs of those particular bands. I did not get to the payment ground until Saturday evening, and consequently knew nothing of the occurrences of the previous days. When I first reached the payment ground, on Saturday evening, a great number of persons complained that the Messrs. Ewing were going to defraud them of the amount of their several claims, and the Indians of the money. There was at that time a very great excitement, which continued until late on Sunday evening, in which I took no part until on Sunday, when, in a conversation with Messrs. Carter and Grover, I advised them to go to G. W. Ewing, and get him, if possible, to consent to the appointment of disinterested persons to investigate the claims, and pay a part or all. One of them went in search of him for that purpose, but found him in the council house distributing the money, which prevented a conversation. I then went to Mr. W. G. Ewing for the same purpose; he made some insulting reply, when I first civilly accosted him, which caused us to quarrel. While we were still talking, some difficulty took place at the council-house, which attracted the attention of every person, and caused a general rush in that direction. I, too, went, but for no other purpose than to see the cause. When I got there, General Grover asked me to speak to the Indians, and explain the reason of the disturbance. In order to do this, I first attempted to get upon the top of the council-house. I caught hold of the top pole of the house to pull myself up, but it gave way, and I fell to the ground. I made a second attempt, but was pushed back by Major Andre, the captain of the guard. I then succeeded in getting upon an adjoining house, when I explained to the Indians the cause of the disturbance. I also told them that the Ewing's were attempting to cheat them out of their money. I told them not to be still like boys, and let themselves be robbed; but to come out like men, and pay their honest debts, and no more. Being excited, I said much on this subject; but most positively deny saying anything against or derogatory to Colonel Pepper, Captain Simonton, or the Government of the United States. And here I must say, that I see in the evidence that has been adduced before you, sir, that the witnesses have blended the remarks made by myself with those made by the Indian chiefs. They were exasperated against those who sold their land, and consequently said many hard things against them; and also against the Government and its officers. I also

explained to the white people the cause of my speaking to the Indians. I furthermore remarked, that I had no claim, no interest to be affected by whatever course might be pursued; but that I disliked to see the Messrs. Ewing cheating and defrauding the Indians, and their neighbors, in the manner already alluded to. I would further state, that in the early part of that day (Sunday) I was sent for by the Indians. I went, and found them assembled. One of them had risen to speak, when the agent, Colonel Pepper, came up, and informed me that it was unlawful to hold counsel with the Indians. Upon this statement being made, I immediately left. After this I had frequent conversations with the Indians, in which they mentioned the cause of their grief, which was the sale of their lands. Thus, sir, I have given you a full, fair, and candid statement of the facts as they occurred, with which I have been identified. I have been thus full, to show the reasons and the feelings that actuated me in the part I took in the affair of the fall of 1836. In conclusion I will say, as I have stated before, that many witnesses, whose evidence has been adduced before you, have blended the remarks made by me with those made by the Indian chiefs who spoke; and I do most solemnly aver that I did not say anything, either directly or indirectly, of the Government or its officers; and as to the statement made in the letter purporting to have been written by some Indians, but actually written by George W. Ewing, they are false! positively false!

A. COQUILLARD.

To JOHN W. EDMONDS, Esq.,

*U. S. Commissioner for investigating claims  
against the Wabash Potawatamies.*

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*Letter to E. V. Cicott.*

LOGANSPOBT, June 20, 1837.

SIR: Unavoidable circumstances having prevented me from attending the court of investigation held by you, as commissioner on the part of the United States, and the Potawatamie Indians, under instructions from the War Department; and understanding that charges of a foul character had been made against me by G. W. Ewing, implicating my character and conduct as one of the individuals selected by Colonel Pepper and Captain Simonton at the last payment of annuities to the above-named Indians to examine and pay claims presented against them on that occasion, I deem it my duty to give you a brief and explanatory statement of the facts connected with that transaction, so far as it regards the claim of Silas Atchison.

In the fall of 1835, Silas Atchison had a claim against the Potawatamies of the Wabash for labor and depredations, amounting to five hundred dollars; it appears that he made several attempts to get that amount from the Indians, but had always failed. He came to me some time after the payment of 1835, and proposed that if I would collect his claim, he would give me the half of it for my trouble. I took it, under the honest conviction that I could not collect more than half of it, as there were a great many claims of the same nature existing against the Indians. I, however,

took the assignment on the back of said claim, and gave him my receipt for the same.

Whilst acting as commissioner at Judge Polke's house last fall, I presented to the gentlemen composing that board "the Atchison claim," and left the room immediately, to afford them an opportunity of acting upon it during my absence. On my return into the room, I found \$250 of the same entered on the list of claims allowed; that amount I presented to Silas Atchison the same day, and he paid me, agreeably to promise, \$125.

Can it be possible that such a transaction could have been received by any person (unless he be an individual devoid of honor and moral rectitude) in any other light than an honest and fair transaction? Such, however, as it is, I submit to your consideration, believing that you will do me ample and impartial justice.

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

E. V. CICOTT.

HON. J. W. EDMONDS.

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*Extract from a letter from Colonel Ewing to the Commissioner.*

JUNE 21, 1837.

N. B.—As to the reference made to me by E. V. Cicott, in his recent communication to you, I will barely remark, that the undisproved fact that he fraudulently obtained \$2,393 from the Wabash Potawatamies in September, 1836, and that he subsequently appropriated \$125 to his own use when acting as a distributing commissioner or mob man, without any honest consideration; and all these facts appearing in evidence before you, is deemed a full and sufficient reply and refutation to anything he may have said relative to me.

It now remains to be determined, from the future action of the Government, whether those Indians will or will not be protected from such open, notorious, and flagrant frauds; perhaps Mr. Cicott could give you some information as to the two boxes of Indian money, which it seems has not yet been accounted for to you; let an honest inquiry be continued; "villany will out."

I remain, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

G. W. EWING.

HON. J. W. EDMONDS,

*United States Commissioner.*

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*Letter from Colonel Ewing to the Commissioner:*

LOGANSPOUT, June 27, 1837.

SIR: In the hopes that this will find you safe and comfortable at Detroit, I have taken the liberty of again reminding you of my former request, namely: that you would oblige us with a copy of Mr. Howard's communi-

cation to you; and also of Mr. Taber's evidence as given in before you, as I did not receive them from Judge Polke's. I conclude you found yourself too much fatigued to copy them there.

On the subject of Coquillard's letter, which you was good enough to show me, I have to say that it is a *a base fabrication of falsehoods*, so far as it relates to my brother and myself; and as it was *personal* and abusive towards us, I hope you will see, at once the propriety of suppressing it. If such Billingsgate effusions as are contained in that communication, be receivable in place of plain matters of fact explanatory of our conduct or acts, it would then indeed be by no means strange that the greatest rascal would make himself out the most honest man.

I could give the pedigree of the villain Coquillard, from his boyish days among the renegade British Canadians, (who fled from our side, and went into Upper Canada during the last war,) at Malden, insulting and torturing the American prisoners, and practising outrages upon their persons and their feelings.

I could trace the same British-hearted rascal during his intercourse among our Indians since the late war up to the present period; and prove upon him that he has ever opposed the measures of our Government, and done much towards alienating these people from it; and at every treaty I ever saw him at, he has notoriously opposed, vilified, and traduced the officers of the Federal Government. At the late treaty, in September, 1836, he used all his influence to excite the British and Catholic Indians to acts of violence, and urged them to go forward and shed blood.

Will the General Government brook such open insult as has been fully proven against that man? and will Mr. Howard be justified in his demagogic course?

This is a subject to which the attention of members of Congress will be called. In my opinion, that gentleman, after having refused to enforce the laws of Congress, notwithstanding he had been fully advised that they had been outraged, (the information having been given by Colonel Pepper, Indian agent, more than six months ago,) took upon himself to speak of responsibility, &c. It is well; and so far as he is concerned, he had better look to it; he will hear of it on the floor of Congress, as well as in the public prints of our own State.

I feel a particular solicitude to know what your report will be relative to the late claims laid before you, especially our own; and am of opinion that it would greatly facilitate the removing agent; for it is not to be presumed that any of those Indians will agree to move out of the State until advised that their just debts are paid and suitably provided for. This determination they have invariably expressed.

It is my wish and desire, however, that nothing may occur to detain them here any longer; but that Colonel Sands may succeed in taking them all off this fall.

With great respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

GEO. W. EWING.

Hon. J. W. EDMONDS.



*Letter of Joseph Barron to the Commissioner.*

INDIAN AGENCY,  
Logansport, Indiana, June 19, 1837.

SIR: I have had an opportunity of examining my testimony as given and signed before you. The condensed manner in which you have to take all testimony down, is my apology for writing you this letter, with the request that you will lay it before the proper department. I have now to re-iterate, in a few words, what I have stated before to you under oath; but, to be brief, I will refer you to my testimony as given, and say, (upon examination of it,) I find nothing but what is strictly correct. I know that the letter was wrote at my house by Mr. G. W. Ewing, at the request of the Indians, and forwarded to the President. Things are told in that letter, (a copy of which you have,) which was not in the original, and never was interpreted by me for the Indians, or requested by the Indians to be said to the President. The main object of the Indians in having the letters wrote, was, that their great father should send a commissioner to settle their pecuniary affairs, without making specific charges against any individuals, particularly against the agent, Colonel Pepper; the Indians all know that he is a faithful public officer, and a good father to them. I have been in the Government service for nearly forty years, and now getting old. I was the interpreter to General Harrison at Post Vincennes, and have since been identified with all the treaties made in the country as interpreter. I followed my chiefs, General Harrison and Tip-ton, and was with them at the battle of Tippecanoe. Since then I have been the Government interpreter for this agency. Now, my dear sir, I have the painful duty to acknowledge that I have acted improperly, and deserved the censure of my officer, Colonel Pepper, and the President, for doing as I have innocently done; that is, allowing Mr. Ewing to hold a council with the Indians for whom I am interpreter, and allowing myself to be deceived by him relative to the contents of the letter alluded to; and also that I did not demand or retain the said letter until my officer, Colonel Pepper, had approved of it. You will please to understand me distinctly, that no reproaches were made in the original letter interpreted by me for the Indians, against Colonel Pepper. I must say, in conclusion, that I beg the favor of the department that I may in my old age be retained in the public service; and through the medium of this letter, to add my regrets that I have, in any manner, innocently been the cause of injuring the feelings of my good officer. To him I owe an additional apology for allowing myself to witness a document purporting to be what the Indians said, which they did not say; neither was Mr. Ewing authorized to say what he has said in that letter. I am not able to read or write English as well as many others, and it being the habit with me to depend upon my officer to take down what the Indians say in writing correctly, I did not examine the letter after Mr. Ewing had wrote it, and was therefore greatly deceived by him. It is a good lesson for me, and I never will again be deceived by bad men, and do things, even innocently, in the absence of my officer, that I afterwards regret.

It was the intention of the Indians, and expressed by them, that the letter was to be given to Colonel Pepper, and by him forwarded to the President. I never interpreted the letter as it now reads. Had I done so, the President would do but justice in turning me out of public employment,

even with the recommendation of forty years' faithful service heretofore. This bad man has deceived me; he has deceived the Indians; and to gratify his personal feelings against individuals, he represents the Indians to say, and me to have interpreted, what they never said.

I hope you will be satisfied with my statement, and will beg the favor of you to make such report to the department as will explain the manner in which I have been deceived.

Very respectfully,

JOSEPH BARRON.

Hon. J. W. EDMONDS,

*Commissioner for investigating for Potawatamie Indians.*

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*Letter of Peter Barron to the Commissioner.*

LOGANSPORT, *June 23, 1837.*

SIR: Having understood that you depart in the morning, I feel it my duty to mention some facts that are not contained in my testimony as given before you. You are aware that Mr. G. W. Ewing and his counsel, both insisted before you, during the time that my examination was going on, that I should be allowed to read the letter to which my name is appended as a witness, as they had; and you readily granted their request. You also recollect, that during the investigation of that letter, the original was called for, and the statement was made that it was at Washington city. Now, sir, I have to state that the said Mr. G. W. Ewing handed me the original letter, to which my own handwriting as witness is appended, to read at his own house, previous to his request that I should have the liberty of reading the copy in your possession; and I do believe that the original letter mentioned, and the copy you have, differ in substance; and am certain that I signed but one letter as a witness.

PETER BARRON.

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*Letter from Commissioner to Colonel Ewing.*

DETROIT, *September 15, 1837.*

SIR: On the morning that I left Logansport, a letter was put into my hands, signed by Peter Barron, in which he states that he witnessed only one letter from the chiefs of the Wabash Potawatamies to the President; that the letter which he signed, and which was that signed by the chiefs, he saw in your possession at Logansport while I was there; and that he believes it to be different from the copy which I had and used on the investigation.

This statement was, under the circumstances, so extraordinary, that I felt myself called upon to procure the original letter from Washington before I would give credit to it. On my arrival at this place, I wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and have received the paper from him.

I regret to say that an inspection of it confirms the statement of Barron. It is evident that the names of the witnesses to it were not written by those

individuals, but they are apparently all in the same handwriting. Gosland, you are aware, cannot write at all; but his name is written in full; and the other signatures are widely different from those with which I became acquainted as the genuine handwriting of the persons named.

You will perceive how serious is the charge which may be made in reference to this paper, and how difficult it will be for me, without an inspection of the paper in your hands, to determine its accuracy.

I must, therefore, request that you will forward to me by mail, directed to me at Hudson, the original letter to which Barron refers.

You will perceive that there is not now any genuine letter from the chiefs before the Government. That which I was directed to investigate has been disputed, in whole or in part, by the chiefs, and by the witnesses to it; and an inspection of the paper itself is against its authenticity. Of course, I cannot permit myself to doubt that the paper which I have is a correct copy of the original in your possession; but I cannot know or say that it is so until I see the original; nor will it until then be in my power to remove the imputations which may grow out of the state of things as they now exist before me.

I hope to receive your early answer, as my report will be delayed until then.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. W. EDMONDS,

*United States Commissioner.*

To Colonel G. W. EWING.

*Letter of the Chiefs as transmitted.*

To our Great Father, ANDREW JACKSON,  
*President of the United States:*

FATHER: We, the undersigned, chiefs, headmen, and warriors of the Wabash Potawatamie Indians of the Eel river agency, have come into this place, having escaped from the late payment ground in our own country under cover and protection of the troops; and in this manner we fled from our homes and villages here, in the hopes of finding security and protection for ourselves and families, from the Catholic and hostile British Indians of the north, and their evil advisers, namely: a great number of degraded Frenchmen and half-bloods, who live near to and among the St. Joseph's Indians; and who have been active in exciting those deluded Indians to fall upon and massacre us.

FATHER: We have always listened well to your good advice and wise counsels, and we find them good. We know you are a great, brave, and good man; that you will do as you promise. We come now with sore hearts, and our minds filled with sorrow, to speak with you and tell you true. We intended to speak to you through our father whom you have placed near us, (Colonel Pepper,) but he has gone away, and can't hear us. Before we had signed treaties to him, father, for all our lands, he was always ready to hear us, and to promise us the protection of your strong arm; but now he has our treaties in his pocket for our *entire country*, he has no time to hear us, nor to *protect* us in our present deplorable situation.

Sold out of house and home, and without a father to provide for, protect, or otherwise take care of us, and hourly in danger (if we return to our villages) of being massacred by those hostile Indians who have ever refused to listen to your good counsels as well as to ours. We wish and intend to follow the advice and counsels of our great father, and to look to him for support and protection—that protection which has been promised us, and which was a strong inducement with us when we sold all our lands, and for which we have incurred the vengeance of our bad people. Again, we saw there were too many white people about our reserves for us to live on them in peace, and we signed a general treaty in September last, selling all our lands to our great father, and agreed to go west of the Mississippi, and accept of that home he had there provided for us. Father, so soon as this fact was known to the Catholic Indians, who resided on these last sold reserves, and to those St. Joseph's and Chicago *renegade* Indians who have collected on them, in great numbers, and all of us being now assembled together near the Tippecanoe river, where we were to receive our money, a great excitement prevailed; those Indians who opposed us, held a council of war, and resolved that every one of us who had signed the treaty should be killed; and they proceeded to appoint war chiefs, whose duty it should be, and now is, to see their decree put in execution. We were immediately menaced and insulted by them, and told what we had to expect from them; and on the next day, being the day on which we had received our annuity and treaty money, the house we were in transacting our business was surrounded by those Indians and their associates and advisers, the clan of Frenchmen before spoken of, and our lives were threatened on every side. Alexander Coquillard, a bad man, who has always opposed our great father's policy, was among them and at the head of the assailants; he got upon a house, and made a speech to the hostile Indians, and urged them to kill us; he told them we were not chiefs; that we were boys and hog thieves; that the President of the United States was a bad man, a *rascal*, and that he had stolen the Indians' lands; that he was now robbing them of their money, (because we were willing to pay our just debts,) and that he would next send us away like dogs west of the Mississippi, where we would be poor and unhappy. He then got up John B. Shadrina, a Potawatamie half-blooded Indian, who repeated again, loud and plain, what Coquillard had before said to all the Indians.

FATHER: We will now return to what we wish to say about our money, most of which we were *robbed* of and *cheated* out of by bad white men, as you will soon hear. We received from Captain Simonton \$64,000, and gave him our receipt; he is a good man, and treated us very kindly; and so did our agent, Colonel Pepper, whom we also love and respect. They took some of this money, with our consent and approbation; to pay depreciation claims; the amount was about \$2,500. This was very right. The balance was all delivered to us after we had given our receipts to Captain Simonton for it; and we were then told by them that the money belonged to us; that it was what our great father owed us for our lands, and we had a right to do what we thought proper with it; but our father, Colonel Pepper, advised us to pay our debts and act like honest men; to which we replied that we intended to do so, and accordingly had got two of our friends (men whom we knew were honest and capable) to aid and assist us in counting and paying such of our debts as we should direct. These two men are Cyrus Taber and George W. Ewing, known to us as Mianii-mo

and Show-o-no-mo—they live in Logansport. Our father, Colonel Pepper, promised also to help us, and to stay with and *protect* us, and keep proper order until we could do our business; it would have required about one day. We began paying off such of our debts as we knew to be justly due from us, and we rejected and refused to pay such as we knew were not proper; (of this description there were a great number.) At the payment, the year before, we had settled with *all* our traders; had then paid them a part, and agreed to pay them another part this year. A list of those claims was left with our agent, Colonel Pepper. He called them over one by one; we ordered them paid so far as we thought just; and the two men we had there to assist us, paid out our money as we directed them. We found two large sums on the schedule at the bottom, that *had never been allowed by us*; they were put on the next day (we afterwards learned) by some person improperly, and without our knowledge and consent. These two large sums, amounting in all to \$6,000, we refused to pay, because we *did not owe them*. We proceeded to pay such claims as we knew to be due from us. We gave Joseph Barron, our old friend, who has always divided his last shilling with us, who had supplied us with goods, provisions, and horses for the last year, in all, the amount of \$5,500. This sum, added to the amount we owed him on the schedule of last year, viz: \$2,500, made in all eight boxes. This amount we paid over to him in open council; our friends, whom we had appointed for that purpose, counted it out to him; he took it away and put it in his house close by. The next man we paid was our friend Ewing, (Show-o-no-mo,) of the firm of Ewing, Walker, & Co., of Logansport. This man we owed as follows, viz: amounts advanced by him to our people, under General Marshall's treaties in December, 1834, in all \$6,200, for which he has the receipts of the different bands; amount due him on schedule of August, 1835, in the hands of agent, \$6,450; this was for goods and provisions advanced and trusted out to the Wabash Potawatamies by him at Fort Wayne and Logansport, since the treaty of October, 1832, and up to that date, as schedule shows; amount advanced by him under the treaties made by Colonel Pepper, our agent, this last year, in all \$11,500; and amount advanced by him in goods and *provisions*, after settlement with us in August, 1835, and until the time of last payment in September, 1836, \$7,850; making in all \$32,000. We had examined all of his vouchers and accounts, and were fully satisfied that we owed him that amount. We therefore gave him our note for the whole amount, and agreed to pay him the one-half of it this year, and the other half next spring. With this understanding he was satisfied, and so were we; for we would have paid him more if he had insisted on it. He is and has long been our *great friend*, has ever supplied and supported us. We have known him as our trader for fifteen years; he speaks our language well, is a good man to us and to our people; they all like him, for he never refuses to clothe or to feed us. Had it not been for him, during the last year, we must have suffered, and our children starved for bread. He paid out his money to purchase flour and bacon in large quantities, (which was very high and hard to get;) and with this he supplied all the Wabash Potawatamies who called on him. It was both our wish and our interest to pay such a friend, and to support him, in return, when it was in our power to do so. He told us that it was necessary for him to have money; that he too was in debt; that he owed his friends in New York, where he had got blankets and rifles for us; that he wanted to pay those

men to get more goods. We therefore paid him as we had agreed to do—the half of his claim, namely, sixteen boxes; and we, with our own hands, in open council, counted and laid them aside for him. The next friend was Cyrus Taber. This man stood in a similar relation to us that our friend Ewing did; we call him Mi-ami-mo; all our people know him, go to his house, and are well treated by him. We owed him, in all, under General Marshall's and Colonel Pepper's treaties, and for other advances made by him up to that time, (embracing \$4,000, which we agreed last year to pay him this year, as our schedule will show,) in all the sum of \$16,000. His account had been examined and explained to us, and we were satisfied of its correctness. We therefore agreed to pay him eight boxes this year, being the one-half of the entire amount of his demand; and to pay him the remainder next spring. He has always been a good man to us, and supplied us when we were in need. We therefore selected him and Ewing as our friends with whom we would do all our business, and we did so almost exclusively. We always counselled and advised with them before we sold any of our lands; for although we love our agent, and believe him to be a good father and an honest man, yet we did not know him as well as we did these two friends of ours, who have lived here among us for many years. They advised us to sell our lands to you, and to do in all cases as our great father would advise—to look to no one but him—that he was the great father of all the Americans, was a great, good, and just man; and that he would be a good father to us if we would be obedient children to him; that he would take care of us, and enable us to pay our just debts, and to go from this country in peace. This was the kind of counsel they gave us, and they went out among our people this last spring and summer, and helped Colonel Pepper make all his treaties; so when we heard the same talk from Colonel Pepper, from our old friend Josa, and from these two last friends, we believed what we heard, and we sold our lands to our great father. In all cases the protection of our great father was promised us, and that our just debts should be paid, or that we would have money enough sent to us by our great father to pay them. In this we don't say we have been deceived, for our hearts were glad when we saw you had sent us so many boxes of money this year; and had we not been *abused* and *robbed* by bad white men of our money, our hearts would yet have been glad, and our honest debts paid.

FATHER: When the white people found we were willing to pay our honest debts, and that we were willing to appropriate the most of our money for this purpose, they began to make papers, (*i. e.* claims;) and in this way, and upon the payment ground, whilst we were transacting our own business, and trying to do what was right and honest, claims and papers amounting to near \$200,000 were made, (most of them there on the ground,) and pushed in upon for immediate payment. We told the people to be patient, and we would take up the claims one by one, call in the claimant, and, so far as he could satisfy us that we owed, we would agree to it, and pay a part then, the balance next year. This did not seem to please or satisfy them. Many large claims were urged by men from the river Raisin, and from Detroit, and from Post Vincennes, of twenty-five and thirty years standing. These we have no knowledge of, believe they are not just, and are not willing to pay any such claims. All these claims were paid by us in the treaties of 1825, 1823, and 1832; and some of them paid two or three times over. These claimants, after getting drunk, the

most of them, and being joined by Coquillard, and many other bad Frenchmen from St. Joseph's, and the hostile Indians, rushed into the house, in part, and others began to tear it down, crying out, "we will take the money by force;" and in this way a general mob took place. We, who were the proper owners of that money, were entirely disregarded, or abused and insulted; and in this angry, rude, and insulting manner, with clubs, pistols, dirks, and guns in their hands, they seized upon our money and took it from us. They then took from our friends, Ewing, Taber, and Barron, the money we had paid them. By this time the agent, Colonel Pepper, had partly succeeded in quieting the mob; but they were very abusive, and so were the hostile Indians, towards us. It was now night; we heard from every side that we were all to be killed; and dreading such consequence, we went to our agent, and reminded him of his promise that he would protect us, and that we expected him to do so; that we had not done anything wrong, as we were aware of. He spoke like a man to us, and said that the great father never broke his word; and that he (the agent) would protect us, or would die with us; to be quiet and keep still, and leave the balance to him. This speech he made to us through our friend, Ewing, and we believed it. Ewing then told us not to fear; that the strong arm of our great father was near at hand, and that it should be over and protect us before the setting of another sun. He encouraged some of our chiefs and young warriors, and told them to defend themselves, if attacked. This friend gave us much good advice, and was frequently with us. The night was spent in great suspense; we did not sleep, for we expected to be attacked, and all killed. The next day was a tedious and long day. The St. Joseph's Indians and Frenchmen held frequent councils all that day, and finally despatched two of their war-chiefs, Ashkum and Ship-she-waw-a-noo, followed by about 300 young Indians of the hostile party, to the council-house; and there they elevated themselves (the two chiefs) upon a large box directly in front of the agent's house, where he, the paymaster, and ourselves were. They there made long and most inflammatory speeches against us and against our great father. They repeated, in substance, what had been said the day previous by Coquillard and Shadrina, on the house-top. They said the President of the United States was a rascal; that he had lied to, and cheated them; that he had stolen our lands, and had made chiefs out of boys and hog-thieves; that we were not chiefs, and should all be killed. About this time good news came, and we were informed that troops were at hand; that one hundred young braves were then on their march to the camp to protect us, and to see that the name of our great father was not insulted. It was true; for they came, and they looked like warriors, and they were all well armed; they marched into the camp. The bad Indians and the bad white people gave way; one of the young braves planted the flag of our great father on the top of the council-house, and neither the bad Frenchmen nor the British or Catholic Indians dared disturb it. This was very gratifying to us; for we saw that, although they disliked the strong arm of our great father, yet they had not the courage to insult and disturb it. Then our hearts were glad, and we felt protected. We then agreed, in order to satisfy the white people that we wanted to do what was right, that Colonel Pepper and Captain Simonton might select five good white men more, who should be entirely disinterested; and that they should be under

our control; should help us pay out part of our money to our own people, and that they then should pay out such sums on the different claims against us as we should direct them to pay, after having first examined the claim, and satisfied ourselves it was just. To do this, it was thought best to remove the money from the payment ground to Judge Polke's, about three miles distant. Accordingly, five men were named by our agent; but he did not select good or honest men, nor were they disinterested. They proved to be very bad men, as you shall soon hear; and they, too, joined in with those bad white people, who had *false claims* against our people, and, among them all, we have been shamefully abused, wronged, and robbed of our annuity; our just debts are not paid; but a large sum, amounting to near forty boxes of our money, were lavished out by these five bad men, and, in many cases, on claims in which they were interested, or had been *bribed* to get allowed. Our agent, after having told these men that they were to pay out that money as we should direct, and presuming, we suppose, that there would be no further trouble about it, left us, and went into Logansport, which we were very sorry for. He had promised, and we think he should have staid with us until we had finished our business; for no sooner had he left, than those five men took full possession of our money. We were not permitted to go into the house, but were turned out, and told that we had nothing to do with that money; that they were going to do as they pleased with it, and truly they did so. And we have good reasons for believing that their own pockets were not a little *benefitted* by the transaction. They never examined one single claim, or asked us whether we did or did not owe certain claimants; but gave it out thus arbitrarily, or kept it themselves, in part, we know not how, nor will they ever give us a list of the names of the persons to whom they paid away our money. FATHER, is not this robbery? and will you suffer us to be thus abused? We owed honest debts, and were anxious to pay them; but we wanted the privilege of settling those debts ourselves. We are told, and believe, that those men paid several large sums or claims, on the condition that, for getting them allowed, they should have the one-half; and we are told this can be positively proven in several cases. We think our father, Colonel Pepper, ought to have remained and protected us from such vile impositions. We think it was his duty to have remained there until we could have disposed of that money, on behalf of our people, as they desired it done; they and ourselves were the proper owners of it; it was taken from us forcibly; our friends, whom we justly owe, are not paid; they are injured and wronged; and yet to them we must again look for aid and support, for we have no money, and those who have cheated us out of our money are gone, we know not where.

FATHER: We came in here from necessity, as before stated; and yet the agent has provided us no provisions. We are supported by our friends Barron, Ewing, and Taber. They are supplying us with beef and bread for ourselves and families. We wanted to talk to our father, the agent, but he left this morning. It is true we have no more lands to sell, but we hope our great father will not refuse to listen to his red children because they have no more land to sell. We have sold all our country to you, father, because you told us you wished us to do so; and we are always willing to listen to your good counsels.

FATHER: We want you to send a good man here to look into this



business for us, to get back our money that the bad white men have stolen from us. We don't want to pay claims that are *not just*, but we want to pay those that are just. We wanted our friends Ewing and Taber paid first of all; and we want you, father, now to see that they are paid. We are ashamed and mortified, because these two men are not paid. It is the voice of the whole of the Wabash Potawatamies that they should be paid. We all know their claims to be just, and we all again unite in asking you to cause them to be paid out of the first money due us from you. There is one man, N. D. Grover, whom we paid all up last year. He came on again this year with another large claim. This we don't think is just, but we believe this man has cheated and wronged us. Our people never got much from him, and we learn he has got a large amount of our money this year again. And Edward V. Cicott: this man we paid a large claim to last year, amounting to \$2,300. We did not justly owe it; nor more than one-fourth of it; but we gave it to him; and this year he has managed to get \$3,500 more of our money for *nothing*, and most unjustly. We owed him nothing, at farthest not to exceed \$500. These things are very wrong; and we want you to protect us from such imposition and frauds. Cicott was one of the five men selected to help us settle our business, (they were all to be entirely disinterested persons,) and he continued to defraud us out of near \$4,000. Grover was one of the drunken mob-men, and has been paid for his rascality by receiving \$3,000 or \$4,000 of our money for nothing.

FATHER: We have now told you the truth about our situation, and as to the shameful manner in which our money has been taken from us; and we ask you to hear the truth, inquire into the outrage, and to do us justice. Next and lastly, as to ourselves: You see our situation; we are here without an agent, or a father, destitute of money, afraid to return with our families to our villages, for our lives are threatened, and bad Indians are waiting for us. We hear from them daily. We are not afraid to die, nor do we want to shed the blood of our own people. If we have done wrong, it has been in listening to your counsels; but we still think we have done right; and we want our great father to send a good talk to this frontier; tell those bad Indians, and the bad white people too, that they must not do as they have done, and that you will punish them for the injury they have already done.

FATHER: The cause of the great trouble was in part owing to the large sum of money you had sent us, which caused bad men, both red and white, from every quarter, to gather in upon us; and our agent was without a guard, or any way of defending himself. But the great difficulty was the fact of our having sold out those remaining reserves upon which the Catholic and British Indians, French, and half-French, and the priest, reside. Those Indians had refused to sell and remove west, and they had shut their ears against your counsel. They have sworn to kill us for having signed the treaty; and we much fear they will execute their *wicked* designs, unless awed from it by a strong talk from you, or unless you send some of your troops here early next spring. We expect the protection of our great father. We hope he will not forget us; if he does, we will most likely be killed by our bad people. You have promised us your *protection* and *friendship*. We want it now, or we are lost. A bad fate awaits us if you don't take some active measures to save us.

FATHER: What we have said comes through our hearts; it is true, and we have nothing more to say.

LOGANSPORT, INDIANA, October 18, 1836.

Pash-po-ho, his x mark.  
 O-Kah-maus, his x mark,  
 I-o-weh, his x mark.  
 M-jo-quis, his x mark.  
 Wee-wee-sah, his x mark.  
 No-taw-kay, his x mark.  
 Po-kah-gaus, his x mark.  
 Nas-waw-kay, his x mark.  
 Ke-waw-nay, his x mark.  
 Mat-chis-saw, his x mark.  
 Nee-boosh, his x mark.  
 Pee-pin-a-naw, his x mark.  
 To-posh, his x mark.

*The proper chiefs, headmen, and warriors of the Wabash Potawatamies.*

Witnesses present,

PETER BARRON,  
 ANTHONY BARRON,  
 ANDREW GOSSLAND,  
 ANDREW JACKSON,  
 JOSEPH BARRON.

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*Original letter of the Chiefs to the President.*

To our Great Father, ANDREW JACKSON,  
*President of the United States:*

We, the undersigned, chiefs, headmen, and warriors of the Wabash Potawatamie Indians of the Eel river agency, came in here, having escaped from the Indian country under cover of the troops; and in this manner fled from our homes and villages to this place, in the hope of finding protection and security for ourselves and families from the Catholic and hostile British Indians of the north, and their evil advisers, namely, a great number of degraded Frenchmen and half-blooded Indians, who live near to and among the St. Joseph's Indians, and who have been active in inciting those Indians to fall upon and massacre us.

OUR FATHER: We have always listened well to your advice and wise counsels, and we find them good. We know you are a great brave, a good man; and that you will do as you promise. We therefore come now with sore hearts, and our minds filled with sorrow, to speak with you and to tell you the truth. We intended to speak to you through our father, whom you had placed here near to us, (Colonel Pepper;) but he has gone away, and can't hear us. Before we had signed treaties to him for all of our lands, he was always ready to hear us, and to promise us the protection of your strong arm; but now that he has our treaties in his pocket, for our entire country, he has no time to hear us nor to protect us in our present deplora-

ble situation. Sold out of house and home, and without a father to provide for and take care of us, and hourly in danger (if we return to our villages) of being massacred by those hostile Indians who have refused to listen to our counsels and to yours too. We wish and intend to follow the advice and counsels of our great father, and look to him for support and protection; that protection which has been promised us, and which was one of the inducements held out to us on selling all our lands. Again, we saw there were too many white people about our reserves for us to live on them in peace; and we signed a general treaty in September last, selling all our country to our great father, and agreed to go west of the Mississippi, and accept of that home he had there provided for us.

OUR FATHER: So soon as this fact was known to the Catholic Indians who resided on these last sold reserves, and to those St. Joseph's and Chicago renegade Indians who had collected on them in great numbers, (and all of us being now assembled together near the Tippecanoe, where we were to receive our money,) a great excitement prevailed. Those Indians who opposed us, and held a council of war, resolved that every one of us who had signed the treaty should be killed; and proceeded to appoint four war-chiefs, whose duty it should be and is to see that decree put in execution. We were immediately menaced and insulted by them, and told what we had to expect; and on the next day, being the day on which we had received our annuity and treaty money, the house we were in transacting our business was surrounded by those Indians, and their associates and advisers, the clan of Frenchmen before spoken of, and our lives were threatened on every side. Alexander Coquillard, a bad man, who was always opposed to our great father's policy, was among them, and at the head of the assassins; he got upon a house and made a speech to the hostile Indians encamped there to kill us; said we were not chiefs; that we were boys and hog-thieves; that the President of the United States was a rascal, and had stolen the Indians' land; that he was now robbing them of their money, and that he would next send them west of the great river, where they would be poor and unhappy. He then got up John B. Shadrina, a Potawatamie Indian, who repeated again, loud and plain, to all the Indians what he had before said. 'Our father, we will now return to what we wish to say about our money, most of which we were robbed of, and cheated out of, by bad white men, as you will soon hear.

We received from Captain Simonton \$40,000, and gave him our receipt. He is a good man, and treated us very kindly. He took some of this, about \$2,500, to pay depredation claims. This was right; the balance was delivered to us after we had given our receipt to him for it; and we were told that the money belonged to us; that it was what our great father owed us for land, and that we had a right to do what we thought proper with it; but our father, Colonel Pepper, advised us to pay our debts and act like honest men. This we intended to do; and accordingly had got two of our friends (men whom we knew to be honest and capable) to aid and assist us in counting and paying such of our debts as we should direct. These two men are Cyrus Taber and George W. Ewing; they live in Logansport. Our father, Colonel Pepper, promised also to help us, and to stay with and protect us, and keep proper order until we could do our business; it would have required about one day. We began paying off such debts as we knew to be justly due from us, and we rejected such as we knew were not proper. At the payment, the year before, we had settled with all our traders, paid

them part, and agreed to pay another part this year. A list of these claims was left with our agent, Colonel Pepper; he called them over one by one; we ordered them paid so far as we thought just, and the two men we had there to assist us paid out our money as we directed. We found two large sums on that schedule that had never been allowed by us; they were put on the next day, (we afterwards learned,) by some person improperly, without our knowledge or consent. These two large sums, amounting in all to \$6,000, we refused to pay, because we did not owe them. We then proceeded to pay such claims as we knew to be just. We gave Jos. Barron, our old friend, who has ever divided his last shilling with us, and who had supplied us with goods, provisions, and horses for the last year, in all the amount of \$5,500. This sum, added to the sum we owed him on the schedule of last year, namely, \$2,500, making in all eight boxes, we paid over to him in open council. Our friends whom we had appointed for that purpose counted it out to him, and he carried it away and put it in his house. The next man we paid was our friend Ewing, (Show-o-no-mo,) of the firm of Ewing, Walker, & Co., of Logansport. This man we owed as follows, namely: amount advanced by him to our people, under General Marshall's treaties in December, 1834, in all about \$6,200; amount allowed him last August, (1835,) as per schedule, for goods and provisions trusted out to our people up to that time, at Fort Wayne and Logansport, \$6,450; amount advanced by him under the treaties made by Colonel Pepper, our agent, this last year, in all about \$11,500; and amount advanced by him in goods and provisions after settlement with us in August, 1835, up to the time of the last payments, in all about \$7,850, making in all \$32,000. All of his accounts and vouchers we had examined, and were fully satisfied that we owed him that amount; we therefore gave him our note for the whole amount, and agreed to pay him the one-half of it this year, and to pay him the other next spring. With this understanding he was satisfied, and so were we; for we would have paid him more if he had insisted on it. He is our *great friend*; has ever supported and supplied us. We have known him as our trader for fifteen years; he speaks our language well; is a good man to us and to our people; they all love him, for he never refuses to clothe or to feed us. Had it not been for him, during the last year we must have suffered, and our children starved for bread. He paid out his money to purchase flour and bacon in large quantities, and with this he supplied all the Wabash Potawatamies who called on him. It was both our wish and our interest to pay such a friend, and to support him in return when it was in our power to do so. He told us it was necessary for him to have money; that he, too, owed his friends in New York, where he had got blankets and guns for us; that he wanted to pay those men, and to get more goods. We therefore paid him over, and laid aside for him sixteen boxes.

The next friend was Cyrtus Taber. This man stood in a similar relation to us that our friend Ewing did. We call him Miami-mo; all our people know him, go to his house, and are well treated by him; and we owed him in all, under General Marshall's treaties and Colonel Pepper's treaties, and for other advances made by him up to that time, (embracing \$4,000 which we agreed last year to pay him this year, as our schedule will show,) in all the sum of \$16,000. His account had been examined and explained to us, and we were satisfied of its correctness. We therefore agreed to pay him eight boxes this year, being the one-half of the entire amount of his demand, and to pay him the remainder next spring. He has always

been a good man to us, and supplied us when we were in need. We therefore selected him and Ewing as our friends, with whom we could do all our business, and we always counselled and advised with them before we sold any of our lands or made any treaties with our agent, Colonel Pepper; and if they had *not advised* us, we never would have sold our lands; for, although we love our agent, and believe him to be a good father and an honest man, yet we did not know him as well as we did our two friends who have lived here among us for many years. They advised us to sell, and to do in all cases as our great father wished us to do, and to look to no one but him; that he was the father of all the Americans, was a great, good, and just man, and that he would be a good father to us if we would be good children to him; that he would take care of us, and enable us to pay our honest debts, and go from this country in peace. This was the kind of counsel they gave us; and they went out among our people this spring and summer and helped Colonel Pepper to make all his treaties. So when we heard the same talk from Colonel Pepper, and from Josa, and from our two friends, we believed it, and we sold our lands. In all cases the protection of our great father was promised us, and that our just debts should be paid, or that we would have money enough sent to us by our great father to pay them. In this we don't say we have been deceived; for our hearts were glad when we saw you had sent us so many boxes this summer, and had we not been *robbed* and *abused* by bad white men of our money, our hearts would now have been glad.

OUR FATHER: When the white men found we were willing to pay our just debts, they began to make papers, (*i. e.* claims;) and in this way, on the payment ground, whilst we were transacting our own business, and trying to do what was right and honest, claims and papers, amounting to near \$200,000, were made, (most of them there on the ground,) and pushed in to us for payment. We told them to be patient, and we would take up the claims one by one, and call in the white man; and so far as he could satisfy us that we owed, we would agree to it, and pay a part then, the balance next year. This did not seem to please them; many large claims were urged by men from River Raisin, Detroit, and Post Vincennes, of twenty-five or thirty years' standing. These we had no knowledge of, and are not willing to pay. These claimants, after getting drunk, the most of them, and being joined by Coquillard and many other bad Frenchmen from St. Joseph's, and the hostile Indians, rushed into the house in part; and others began to tear it down, crying out, "We will take the money by force;" and in this manner a general mob took place. We who were the true and proper owners of that money were entirely disregarded, or abused and insulted; and in this angry mode and insulting manner, they, with clubs, pistols, dirks, and guns in their hands, seized upon our money and took it from us. They then took from our friend Ewing the sixteen boxes we had paid him; it was yet in the house. They then proceeded to our friend Taber's store, a short distance off, and demanded his money, which was also given up or taken by the mob. They then went upon old Joseph Barron and took from him his money. By this time the agent, Colonel Pepper, had succeeded in quieting the mob to a certain extent; but they were very abusive, and so were the hostile Indians, towards us. By this time it was night. We heard from every side that we were all to

be killed; and, dreading such consequence, we went to the agent and reminded him of his promise that he would protect us, and that we expected him to do so; that we had not done anything wrong that we were aware of.

He spoke like a man to us, and said that the great father never broke his word; and that he would protect us, or he would die with us; to be quiet and keep still, and leave the balance to him. This speech he made to us through our friend Ewing, and we knew it was true. He, Ewing, told us not to fear; that the strong arm of the great father was near at hand; and that it should be over and protect them before the setting of another sun. He encouraged some of our chiefs, and gave out pistols and knives to our young braves, and told them to defend themselves if they were attacked. This friend gave us much good advice, and was constantly with us. The night was spent in great suspense. We did not sleep, for we expected to be attacked and all killed. The next day was a tedious and long one; the St. Joseph's Indians and Frenchmen held frequent councils all that day, and finally despatched two of their war chiefs, Ashkum and Ship-shenaw-a-no, followed by about three hundred young Indians, to the council house. They there got a large box and placed the two war chiefs on it, directly in front of the agent's house, where he, Captain Simington, and ourselves were, who made these long and inflammatory speeches against us and against our great father. They repeated in substance what Coquillard and Shadrina had said the day before on the house-top. They said the President of the United States was a rascal; that he had lied to and cheated them; that he had stolen their lands, and made chiefs out of boys and hog-thieves; that we were not chiefs and should all be killed. About this time good news came, and our friend Ewing informed us that the troops were at hand; that a hundred young braves were then on their march to the camp to protect us, and to see that the name of our great father was not insulted. He spoke true; for they came, and they looked like warriors. They were all well armed; they marched into the camp; our bad Indians and bad white men gave way. One of the young braves planted the flag of our great father on the top of the house, and a secret message was sent by our friend to the bad Frenchmen and bad Indians to come now and tear down that house or that flag; but they did not come.

We then agreed, in order to satisfy the white people that we wanted to do what was right, that Colonel Pepper and Captain Simington might select five more good white men, who should be entirely disinterested, and that they should be under our control, should help us pay out part of the money to our own people, and that they should then pay out such sums on the different claims as we should order them to pay after having examined it. To do this, it was thought best to remove the money from the payment ground to Judge Polke's, about three miles distant. Accordingly, five men were named by our agent and Captain Simington; but they did not select good or honest men, nor disinterested men. They proved to be very bad men, as you will soon learn, and they, too, joined in with those bad white people who had false claims against our people, and among them all we have been shamefully abused, wronged, and robbed of our annuity. Our debts just are not paid, but a large sum, amounting to near forty boxes, were lavished out by these five bad men; in many cases given out on claims in which they were interested, or had been bribed to get allowed. Our agent, after having told these men that they were to pay out that money as we should direct,

and presuming, as we suppose, that there would be no further trouble about it, left us and went into Logansport, which was very wrong in him. He had promised, and we think it was his duty to have remained there until we had finished our business. No sooner had he left, than these five men took full possession of our money. We were not permitted to go into the house, but were turned out, and told that we had nothing to do with the money, that they were going to do as they pleased with it. And truly they did so, and we have good reason to believe that their own pockets were not a little benefitted by the transaction. They never examined one claim, nor asked us whether we did or did not owe, but disposed of that money of ours (they say) justly, nor will they give us a list of the names to whom they paid it. Our father, is this not robbery? and will you suffer us to be thus abused? We owed honest debts, and were anxious to pay them; but we wanted the privilege of settling those debts ourselves. We are told and believe that those men paid several large claims on the condition that for getting them allowed they should have the one half; and we are told this can be positively proven in several instances. Our father ought to have remained and protected us from such vile imposition. We think it was his duty to have remained there until our money was disposed of by us for and on behalf of our people, who were the proper owners of it. But, as it is, we are injured; our friends whom we honestly owe are not paid, and they are thereby seriously injured and wronged; and yet to them we must again look for aid and support, for we have no money, and those who cheated us out of it have gone we know not where.

**OUR FATHER:** We came in here from necessity, as before stated, and yet the agent has given us no provisions. We are supported here by our friends Joseph Barron, Ewing, and Taber. They are furnishing us beef and bread. We wanted to talk to our father, the agent, but he left this morning; had not time to hear us, we suppose. We have no more land to sell, it is true; but we hope our great father will not refuse to listen to his red children because they have no more land to sell. We have sold it all to you, father, because you said you wished us to *do so*; and we are willing to listen to your wise counsels.

**OUR FATHER:** We want you to send a good man here to look into this business, to get back the money that the bad white people have stolen from us and robbed us of. We don't want to pay debts that are not just, and we want to pay those that are just. We wanted Taber and Ewing paid first of all; and we want you, our great father, now to see that they are paid. We feel ashamed and mortified because these men are not paid. It is the voice of the whole of the Wabash Potawatamies. We all owe them, and know their claims to be just, and we all unite in asking you to cause them to be paid out of the first money due us from you. There is one man (N. D. Grover) whom we paid all up last year; he comes on with another large claim. This we don't think is just; we think he has cheated and wronged us. Our people never got much from him. We learn he has got a large amount of our money this year again. And E. V. Cicott: this man we paid a large claim to last year, \$2,300. We did not justly owe it, but we gave it to him. This year he has got \$3,000 more of our money for *nothing*; we owed him nothing, at farthest not to exceed \$500. These things are very wrong, and we want you to protect us from such impositions and frauds. We don't think we owed either of these men to exceed \$500. Cicott was one of the five men selected to help us settle our business. (They

were to be disinterested men.) Grover was one of the drunken mob men, and has been paid for his rascality by getting \$3,000 or \$4,000 of our money for nothing. We did not owe him but a very small amount, if anything.

OUR FATHER: We have now told you the truth about our situation, and as to the manner our money was taken from us, and we ask you to hear and learn the truth and to do us justice. Next and lastly as to ourselves: You see our situation; we are here without an agent or father, destitute of money, afraid to return with our families to our villages, for our lives are threatened, and bad Indians are waiting for us. We hear from them daily. We are not afraid to die, nor do we want to shed the blood of our people. If we have done wrong, it has been in taking your advice and in listening to your counsels. But we still think we have done right, and we want you, our father, to send a good talk to this frontier. Tell these bad Indians, and the bad white people too, that they must not do as they have done, and that you will punish them for the damage they have done. Our father, the cause of the great trouble was in part owing to the large sum of money you had sent us, which caused bad men, both red and white, to gather in from every quarter, and our agent was without a guard or any way of defending himself; but the great difficulty was the fact of our having sold out the remaining reserves upon which the Catholic Indians reside, and which they refused to sell, and had shut their ears against your counsels. They have sworn to kill us for having signed the treaty, and we much fear they will carry out their wicked intentions, unless awed from it by a strong talk from you. We hope our great father will not forget us; we expect his protection and friendship.

OUR FATHER: After our money was thus squandered and distributed, we went in and demanded from those five men, through our interpreter, Joseph Barron, a receipt or copy of the list of names to whom they had paid our money, or to let us know what they had done with it. All of this they refused to give us, and replied that they had nothing to do with us.

OUR FATHER: What we have said is from our hearts. It is true, and we have no more to say.

Done at Logansport, October 18, 1836.

Pash-po-ho,	his x mark.
O-ka-maus,	his x mark.
I-o-wa,	his x mark.
M-jo-quis,	his x mark.
We-we-sah,	his x mark.
No-taw-kah,	his x mark.
Po-kah-gaus,	his x mark.
Nas-wau-kay,	his x mark.
Ke-waw-nay,	his x mark.
Mat-chis-saw,	his x mark.
Ne-bo-ash,	his x mark.
Pe-pin-a-waw,	his x mark.
Po-posh,	his x mark.

Witnesses present,

PETER BARRON,  
 ANTHONY BARRON,  
 ANDREW GOSSLAN,  
 ANDREW JACKSON,  
 JOSEPH BARRON.



*Copy of indictment for the riot.*

STATE OF INDIANA, }  
 Fulton county, } ss.

*Fulton Circuit Court, March term, A. D. 1837.*

The grand jurors of the said State of Indiana, good and lawful men of said county of Fulton, empanelled, sworn, and charged, in the said Fulton circuit court, at the term thereof aforesaid, to inquire within and for the body of said county of Fulton, upon their oath present: That Alexis Coquillard, Nicholas Grover, Job B. Eldridge, Francis Comparet, John B. Shadrina, and Chauncey Carter, late of said county, on the tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six, with force and arms, in the county aforesaid, did then and there unlawfully, riotously, and routously assemble and gather together to disturb the peace of the said State; and being so assembled and gathered together, did then and there unlawfully, riotously, and routously, and in a violent and tumultuous manner, make a great noise, riot, and disturbance; and did then and there continue to remain making a noise, riot, and disturbance, for the space of an hour and more then next following, to the great terror and disturbance of the good citizens of this State, to the evil example of all others in like case offending, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

And the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, that the said Alexis Coquillard, Nicholas D. Grover, Job B. Eldridge, Francis Comparet, John B. Shadrina, and Chauncey Carter, on the day and year last aforesaid, with force and arms in the county aforesaid, did then and there unlawfully, riotously, and routously, and in a violent and tumultuous manner, tear, pull, and force off the butting pole of a certain house belonging to the United States of America, then and there being, to the great disturbance and terror of the good citizens of this State then and there being, to the evil example of all persons in like cases offending, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

JOSEPH L. JERNEGAN, P. A.

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No. 9.

*Extract from a letter of Major John Garland, principal military disbursing agent, dated*

*DETROIT, January 17, 1838.*

DEAR SIR: Mr. Schoolcraft has obliged me with a perusal of the report of Colonel Edmonds, upon the difficulties which arose at the payment of the Potawatamies of Indiana, in 1836. It is written with more than ordinary clearness, and some of his suggestions as to the manner in which the annuities should be paid are excellent.

Wherever large bodies of Indians are assembled to receive their annuities, there the traders will be found, with intoxicating drinks and worthless trinkets, with which they possess themselves of every thing that is useful or valuable to the Indian. The consequence is, often, drunkenness, riot,

and murder; leaving the payment more injured than benefitted. Whereas, if they are paid off in small bands, and at different places, the traders will find it rather unprofitable to follow up the paymaster, and thus leave the Indians in the full enjoyment of that which was designed for their benefit.

I am satisfied that goods and provisions, judiciously selected and issued, will prove more beneficial to a large majority of the northwestern Indians than money, and will be less sought after than specie. This description of payment will interfere very little with the *fur trader*. The other Indian traders with the Indians are most of them nuisances to the community with whom they trade.

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No. 10.

[EXTRACTS.]

WASHINGTON, *January 20, 1838.*

SIR: Your letter of this date is received, calling on me to report under *three* specific heads: First, on the policy of paying annuities to Indian tribes altogether in goods. Second, on the expediency of changing or abolishing the present system of trade with the Indian tribes; and thirdly, as to the manner in which these objects can best be effected, having regard to economy; to liberal justice to the Indians, and the proper discharge of the obligations of the Government.

I have the honor to state, in reply, in detail, as follows: First. From my experience of nearly nineteen years in the remote northwestern region, I can safely say, it would be sound policy to pay all annuities to the several tribes in goods, adapted to their wants and habits respectively. This arrangement, once carried into effect, would rescue the Indians from that degradation and want into which they are fast falling, under the present system of *specie* payments. The Indians derive little or no benefit in the northwest from their treaties, in consequence of the cupidity of the fur traders, who monopolize the specie, and leave the poor Indian in a state of drunkenness and despair, and his family, of course, destitute; consequently, with this view of *facts*, no philanthropic mind can hesitate as to the propriety of supplying the Indian tribes, when it can be done, with merchandise in lieu of money. Second. Of the expediency of changing or abolishing the present system of Indian trade. It would seem to me, rather than we should lose all control over the tribes, by the malific practices of the trade, that the monopoly of a powerful company had best be curtailed, and not destroyed at once. Hence, you will observe, I advocated strongly in my letter to the department of date the 24th of July last, the necessity, as well as the propriety, of the re-establishment of the "factory system" west of the Mississippi. This once done, you would not find it expedient to abolish the present system, or to change it in anywise, as the factors and agents would, in a short time, draw the Indians wholly under their influence; therefore, it is my opinion that unless something of this nature be substituted by the Government, we should not be safe in changing too materially the present onerous system of trade with the Indians, or to abolish it in the dispersed state of the tribes. Third, and lastly; to effect the ob-

jects herein indicated upon the most economical plan, dealing liberally with the Indians, and to discharge the obligations of the Government. I have no doubt but that all the tribes in the northwest may be induced to commute their specie for goods, and such other articles as their necessities are known to require; but this decision of the Indians would be violently opposed by the fur companies, and hence the necessity of the factory system, which would place the officers of the Indian Department on even ground, and render certain the accomplishment of this all important item in the control of the ignorant savage, for his benefit. Supplies of merchandise, including treaty stipulations, may be now transported to almost any section of the Indian Territories, at a comparatively small cost.

I will remark, in conclusion, that the early action of Congress, on the affairs of our Indian relations, at each and every session, would enable the department to discharge promptly and satisfactorily all obligations on the part of the Government to the Indian tribes.

With high respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

LAW. TALIAFERRO,

*Indian Agent at St. Peter's.*

HON. G. A. HARRIS,

*Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

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No. 11.

REDFOON, February 5, 1838.

SIR: In further reference to your letter of the 20th ultimo, I have the honor to submit the following remarks on the subjects indicated: 1. There can be no doubt of the soundness of the policy of paying the annuities to the Indian tribes *altogether in goods*, having reference especially to their benefit and future comfort in all respects. All funds should be paid to heads of families on fair rolls prepared at the department, and furnished all disbursing agents for that purpose. This course of policy, besides rendering the condition of the Indians more free from vice and corruption, would check the undue influence which the Indian traders exercise over the minds of the chiefs and braves, and in a few years' time withdraw them from the wandering habits of the chase; when they would become agriculturists and stock-raisers, and very soon a just delight in the knowledge of the value of property. *Half-yearly payments* to the tribes ought to be as generally adopted as practicable. 2. The expediency of changing or abolishing the present system of trade with the Indian tribes has been a subject of deep study and great concern with me for many years, and since the *extraordinary transactions of February, 1823*, on the Mississippi, knowing, as I do, the general policy of traders as wholly at war with that of the Government, their influence must be curtailed, if not destroyed, before any legislation, however wise and discriminating for the better condition of the tribes, can be possibly carried out for their general benefit, or for the peace and tranquillity of an extensive frontier. The re-establishment of the *factory system* for the tribes of the northwest would render the

present baneful influences of the fur trader comparatively harmless, and our future intercourse, confiding in the Government, prosperous and happy.

The *strong holds* of the trade at all our *military* posts, ought to be abolished; this I advocated some years since, and my views were seconded by the department. Do this, and exclude all persons from our *reservations* except those attached to the civil and military branches of the public service; leaving all *interior* trading locations subject to the future action of the department. This step taken, it would paralyze completely the onerous policy and views of the trade, by placing *all* on an equal footing. *Citizens* and *foreigners* alike ought to be excluded from the Indian country, unless by express authority of the department. I presume you will find but little discrepancy in the reports of the agents generally upon the affairs of the fur trade as connected with the conduct of the traders.

Goods are sold to the Indians at extravagant prices, and the traders' price, also, the *furs* and *peltries* they are to receive in return. All annuities and treaty stipulations are monopolized, our treaties with the tribes resisted, and unless the Indians submit wholly to their dictation, they are threatened with the loss of their trade, and consequent starvation and want. This powerful weapon thrown into the scales, gives the trader all his influence, and leaves the agent with but slim means wherewith to counteract so malific a course. Under all these facts, it seems cruel that we cannot at once abolish the whole system. But the dispersed state of our Indian population requires much time and as mature deliberation on the score of humanity and justice, unless the factory system could at once be introduced—a glorious day for the tribes of the northwest, and the saving of millions, in the due course of time, to the United States, in *blood* and *treasure*. 3. To effect many of the objects herein indicated, would require the action of Congress; particularly an act for the re-establishment of trading houses or depots for the security of annuities, &c. in the Indian country. Agents of experience and honesty of purpose, having requisite quarters and store-houses, might *gratuitously* receive, store, and deliver, each fall, the second instalment of goods, provisions, and general treaty stipulations, set apart at spring payments in trust for delivery by the agent and military officer.

The annuities, &c. being disposed of, we must come to the trade. All that can at present be done, with a due regard to economy, to liberal justice to the Indians, and the proper discharge of the obligations of the Government, can in part be fulfilled and secured by the suggestions which I have the honor herewith to submit.

With high respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

LAW. TALIAFERRO,

*Indian Agent at St. Peter's.*

Hon. C. A. HARRIS,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs.*