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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, in answer to a resolution of the House of the 23d ultimo, relative to expenditures in the Indian Department.

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EXPENDITURES IN THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the House of the 23d ultimo, relative to expenditures in the Indian department.

MAY 10, 1866.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, D. C., May 9, 1866.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication of the 7th instant, addressed to this department by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, stating that, in order to comply with the requirements of the House resolution of the 23d ultimo, in reference to expenditures in the Indian service without delay, it will be necessary to increase the clerical force of his office for a short time.

I concur in the opinion of the Commissioner, and respectfully request that the subject may be brought to the attention of the House, that authority may be granted and the requisite appropriation made for the employment of the additional force indicated by the Commissioner, viz: ten clerks for the space of one month.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES HARLAN, *Secretary.*

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS,

Washington, D. C., May 7, 1866.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by reference from your department, of a copy of a resolution passed by the House of Representatives on the 23d ultimo, requesting you to furnish the House with a "full statement of all moneys on hand on the 10th day of July, 1865, applicable to the support of the various Indian tribes, and for all other purposes connected with the

Indian service; also the entire amount which has been expended since that time and up to the 20th day of April, 1866, and the object for which such expenditures have been made, together with the amount now on hand applicable to said service under the following heads; also the amount which has been expended over and above the appropriations already made, viz:

- " Pay of superintendents and agents.
- " Pay of temporary clerks by superintendents.
- " Pay of interpreters.
- " Pay for presents to Indians.
- " Pay for provisions for Indians.
- " Pay for agency buildings and repairs.
- " For contingent expenses of the Indian department.
- " For making treaties with Indian tribes.
- " For transportation of Indian annuity goods.
- " Support of refugee Indians in the southern and middle superintendencies.
- " Amount expended for support of refugee and other Indians over and above the amount heretofore appropriated;" upon which resolution you direct me to make a report.

By "a full statement of all moneys on hand," I presume is meant all moneys in the treasury. When a request for a requisition is drawn in this office, it frequently happens that some days elapse before the requisition issues upon it, and that weeks, even months, pass before the amount is drawn from the treasury. The sum drawn for, however, is at once charged in this office. Therefore, in a statement of "moneys on hand" on any given day, there would be a considerable discrepancy between the amount as appeared from the books of this office and the actual amount in the treasury. This would be especially the case where, as in this instance, the statement includes fractional quarters. To attain accuracy in the report, therefore, I had the honor in a communication to you of the 2d instant to suggest that the Hon. Secretary of the Treasury be requested to cause a statement to be furnished this department of the amount of funds in the treasury under appropriations for the Indian department on the 10th day of July, 1865, and the amount remaining on hand on the 20th April, 1866.

Although making this statement will necessarily consume much time, it is the least laborious part in preparing the information asked for by the resolution referred to. To ascertain "the entire amount which has been expended since July 10, 1865, and the objects for which such expenditures have been made," will involve an examination of the accounts of every superintendent and Indian agent in the country, and an immense amount of clerical labor in the way of copying.

The regular clerical force of this office is, as you are aware, insufficient to conduct the current business of the bureau. To neglect or postpone this would seriously embarrass the service and injure the public interests.

I desire, however, that the statement called for should be made at the earliest day practicable; and I would, therefore, suggest that the attention of the House of Representatives be called to the difficulties in the way of a prompt response to their resolution, and that they be requested, if the matter is deemed of sufficient importance, to provide additional clerical force to enable the department to furnish the information required without delay. It will require at least ten clerks for one month to perform the labor involved in the examination and report.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. N. COOLEY, *Commissioner.*

Hon. JAMES HARLAN,
Secretary of the Interior.