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**Additional provisions for Sioux Indians. Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting communications from the Secretary of the Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asking that an appropriation be made to purchase additional provisions for the Sioux Indians.**

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ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR SIOUX INDIANS.

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

*Communications from the Secretary of the Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asking that an appropriation be made to purchase additional provisions for the Sioux Indians.*

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DECEMBER 4, 1890.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
December 3, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress, a communication received from the honorable Secretary of the Interior inclosing a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and other papers connected therewith, asking that an appropriation of \$100,000 be made to provide for the purchase of additional beef or other necessary articles for issue to the Sioux Nation of Indians.

Respectfully, yours,

W. WINDOM,  
Secretary.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, November 29, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the following statement of facts and recommendations thereon:

The appropriations made by Congress for the subsistence of the Sioux and for purposes of their civilization, under the agreement of February 28, 1877 (19 Stats., 254), have been gradually decreasing since 1883. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1884, the appropriation was \$1,325,000; for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1885, \$1,225,000, and \$50,000 additional upon condition that the remainder of Sitting Bull's band should return to the United States; for 1885-'86, \$1,250,000; for 1886-'87, \$1,200,000; for 1887-'88, \$1,000,000; for 1888-'89, \$1,000,000;

for 1889-'90, \$900,000; for 1890-'91 (the present fiscal year), \$950,000, a slight increase.

The obligation of the Government under said agreement is to continue the rations "until the Indians are able to support themselves," and Congress, very properly I think, regards the Indians themselves as being under obligation to make some effective effort to become self-supporting, and expects them to increase each year the measure of their ability to support themselves. Hence the gradual reduction in the appropriation made for their support and civilization.

When, in 1889, the Sioux Commissioners were negotiating with the various bands of Sioux Indians for the cession and relinquishment of a large portion of their reservation, they were repeatedly questioned as to whether the acceptance or rejection of the act of Congress providing for the division of their reservation into separate reservations and the cession and relinquishment of the remainder (25 Stats., 888), would influence the action of the Government with reference to their rations, and the Commissioners assured them in the most positive terms that it would not and that they would continue to receive their rations as provided in former treaties.

It so happened that immediately following the successful issue of the negotiations the rations were greatly reduced on account of the reduction of \$150,000 in the appropriation for supplies, subsistence, etc., for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890, \$100,000 of which was in reduction of the appropriation for subsistence (rations) and civilization of the Indians. Added to this the summer before had been unusually dry, owing to which the crops throughout Dakota and the Northwest had proved almost an entire failure, so that the Indians who planted received but little, if any, returns for their labor.

In submitting their final report the Commissioners dwelt upon the matter of the reduction of rations, observing that it could not but have a very injurious effect; that it would be impossible to convince the Indians that the reduction was not due to the fact that the Government, having obtained their land, was less concerned than before in looking after their material interests; that it would be regarded by them as a breach of faith and as a direct violation of the statements made to them by the Commission, and that it was already being used by those who opposed the acceptance of the act (notably at Pine Ridge) as an argument in support of the wisdom of their opposition. "No action could possibly have been more ill-timed," the Commissioners observe, "and its results will be more apparent as the reduction in their food supply becomes noticeable." I quote further from their report:

When the Government hereafter urges the taking of land in severalty, or seeks to induce the Indians to consent to any of the changes in existing conditions on the reservations, which must necessarily follow if any improvement is to be expected in their future status, it will be found that their natural disinclination to accept innovations will be strengthened, their suspicions more difficult to satisfy, because they feel that they have been deceived.

We do not desire to be understood as recommending that the Indian ration shall be continued as at present; on the contrary, we believe it should be gradually reduced. The conditions on the Sioux Reservation have greatly changed within the past ten years. Now the only way in which the Indians can obtain food, other than such as is issued as rations, is from the cultivation of the soil and the grazing of animals. The game which formerly supported them is gone, and even the wild fruits and wild vegetables have largely decreased in quantity.

It is therefore an act of injustice closely approaching cruelty to take away, in their present condition, rations to which they have been accustomed, without notice, so that means may be taken to supply the deficiency.

No people who have been cared for as these Indians have for years can be expected to work under the discouraging conditions attending agriculture on their reserva-

tions without a stronger stimulant than homilies on the dignity of labor. For this reason we think rations should be reduced in order that the necessity for increasing their food supply should prove the needed stimulant to exertion, but this should not be done at the end of summer or at a season too late to plant crops.

The commission earnestly recommends an appropriation, to be immediately available, of a sum sufficient to make the beef ration of the Sioux Indians equal to that of the fiscal year 1889. Much of the beef necessary to supply this deficiency could and should be bought from the Indians upon the reservations. In this connection attention is called to that portion of this report under the heading of rations.

This Department had no alternative but to reduce the rations, Congress having reduced the appropriation for the purchase thereof; but in the draft of a bill prepared by the Department and submitted to the President to be transmitted to Congress an item was inserted as follows:

To enable the Secretary of the Interior to purchase for the Sioux Nation of Indians additional beef, required for issue, the rations having been reduced on account of reduced appropriation for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and ninety, one hundred thousand dollars.

The appropriation thus sought to be obtained was to supply the deficiency in the subsistence supplies for the year ending June 30, 1889, as earnestly recommended by the Sioux Commission.

As was stated in my report to you, dated November 25, 1890, Congress did not make the appropriation asked for.

It will be proper to state, however, that the appropriation for subsistence and civilization of the Sioux for the current fiscal year was raised in the Senate from \$850,000, the amount appropriated in the bill as it came from the House, to \$950,000. The estimate of the Department was for \$1,000,000, and the House, it seems, cut it down to \$850,000.

This increase by the Senate, which was agreed to by the House, can not be regarded in any sense as an appropriation in satisfaction of the sum asked for to furnish additional beef on account of the reduced appropriation for 1889-'90, and it would be difficult to satisfy the Indians by any such explanation.

The reason for the increase was explained by Senator Dawes, when the bill was under consideration, as follows:

The amount appropriated last year was \$900,000. An estimate was made this year for \$1,000,000, and the Committee on Appropriations have placed the amount at \$950,000. The House placed the appropriation at \$850,000, and among the reasons why the Committee on Appropriations increased the amount to \$950,000 was that \$900,000, the amount appropriated last year, proved to be insufficient and was very short, and the Indians have complained for many years that the treaty had not been fulfilled.

Last year, while the negotiations for the surrender of this large tract of land were going on, the Indians were called off from their farms and lost a good part of the summer. They consequently lost very greatly in their crops and were very short, and some portion of that shortage it is necessary to make up, and it seemed to the Department and to the committee a very inopportune time to cut down the appropriations to a smaller amount than they ever were before under their treaty, because it left them in a state of irritation and complaint against the Government.

They say, "You have got 11,000,000 acres of land and you have not paid us any portion of the consideration for it, and the first evidence we have of it is that you cut down our treaty appropriation for subsistence \$100,000." If we should do this it would leave the Indians in a state of mind very unpropitious for carrying out all of the provisions of that treaty, and it was thought that of all times it would be the most unfit to do it at this time; and inasmuch as it seemed to be absolutely necessary to the Department for their maintenance that we could not cut down even below the amount last year as the bill came from the House. (Congressional Record, Vol. 21, No. 180, p. 8233.)

The Sioux commissioners told the Indians that they would continue to receive their rations as provided in existing treaties, and in the re-

port of their proceedings the commissioners assert in the most positive terms that without such assurances it would have been impossible to obtain their consent to the cession of their lands.

\*They felt and so expressed themselves that the reduction of the rations following close upon the successful termination of the negotiations was a most unfortunate circumstance, and would be regarded by the Indians as a breach of faith on the part of the Government; hence it was that in submitting their final report they earnestly recommended that the deficiency in the rations of 1889-'90 be made up to the Indians.

The quantity of beef purchased and delivered at the Sioux agencies for subsistence of the Sioux Indians during the current fiscal year is sufficient when the beeves are received there in the fall and in good flesh to give to each Indian—man, woman and child—about 2 pounds gross beef (equivalent to about 1 pound net) for each day, but during the severe winters in that latitude range feeding for the beef cattle becomes difficult and scarce and the cattle lose flesh, and the net beef issue more than correspondingly diminishes.

While, therefore, the Indians may not have any just cause for complaint on account of quantity and quality of beef they are now receiving, there will be just cause for such complaint as the winter progresses and spring approaches.

In purchasing beef cattle in the early fall and placing them upon the respective reservations the United States procures the quantity of beef necessary to feed the Indians, but when it is issued out as monthly or semi-monthly rations to the Indians it is issued as of the weight when received and not as of the actual weight at date of issue.

My object in submitting the foregoing statement at this time is to urge that an appropriation of \$100,000 be made in express terms to supply the deficiency in the beef rations caused by the reduction in the appropriation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890.

The Indians have come to believe, whether rightfully or not, that they have a just claim upon the Government in that amount on account of the reduction of their rations for 1889-'90. This is not at all surprising in view of the assurances made to them by the Sioux commissioners, as herein set forth, and that they have been encouraged in the belief since the commissioners were with them there is ample evidence.

General John R. Brooke, who is now in command of the troops at Pine Ridge Agency, in a recent telegram to General Miles, said:

These people have real grievances on the score of reduction of rations of last year's beef, the failure of crops last year and this year, which reduces them to great straits in the way of food. This should be corrected at once and the fact announced to them, and their just claims be granted without delay.

I do not believe the Indians will be satisfied with anything short of this. The fact that the Senate raised the appropriation for the current fiscal year from \$850,000, as fixed by the House, to \$950,000 does not help the matter. The Indians expect that the loss of rations for the year that has passed, 1889-'90, owing to the reduction of the appropriation for that year, will be made up to them, and this will have to be done if the Government desires to remove the suspicion of bad faith which the Indians undoubtedly entertain, and reassure them of its good intentions and friendly feeling toward them.

I earnestly recommend that the matter be brought to the attention of Congress as soon as possible, with request that an appropriation of \$100,000 be made to be used in the purchase of additional beef or other

necessary articles for issue to the Sioux Nation of Indians, on account of the reduction in their rations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890, and that the appropriation be made at once, and without waiting for the passage of the regular Indian appropriation bill. For obvious reasons it is important that the object of the appropriation should be explicitly stated in the bill or item of appropriation.

I have prepared and herewith submit a draught of a bill providing for the appropriation, in which the language used in the draught of a bill submitted by you to the President on the 30th of January last covering the recommendations of the Sioux Commission is repeated in substance.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. V. BELT,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*December 2, 1890.*

Respectfully forwarded to the honorable Secretary of the Treasury, and earnestly urge the early action of Congress thereon.

JOHN W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary.*

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A BILL providing for the purchase of additional beef or other necessary articles for issue to the Sioux Nation of Indians.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby appropriated, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be immediately available, to enable the Secretary of the Interior to purchase for the Sioux Nation of Indians additional beef, or other necessary articles required, for issue to them in fulfillment of the assurances made that additional rations would be provided because their rations were reduced on account of reduced appropriation for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eight hundred and ninety.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, December 2, 1890.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, in connection with office letter of November 20, 1890, recommending that Congress be urged to appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for the purchase of additional beef or other necessary articles for the Sioux Nation of Indians, a copy of a letter dated November 27, 1890, from D. F. Royer, esq., United States Indian agent at the Pine Ridge Agency, S. Dak., reporting the proceedings of a council of the Indians of said agency, held at his office on November 26, 1890, which I would respectfully recommend be transmitted to Congress for the information of that body.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. V. BELT,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE, OFFICE OF INDIAN AGENT,  
Pine Ridge Agency, S. Dak., November 27, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following proceedings of a council held in my office yesterday in the presence of Special Agent Cooper and myself.

American Horse, Fast Thunder, Spotted Horse, Pretty Back, and Good Lance present, with American Horse as spokesman:

I think the late Sioux commissioners (General Crook, Major Warner, and Governor Foster) had something to do with starting this trouble. I was speaker for the whole tribe. In a general council I signed the bill (the late Sioux bill), and 580 signed with me; the other members of my band drew out and it divided us, and ever since these two parties have been divided. The non-progressive started the ghost dance to draw from us. We were made many promises, but have never heard from them since. The Great Father says if we do what he directs it will be to our benefit, but instead of this they are every year cutting down our rations, and we do not get enough to keep us from suffering. General Crook talked nice to us, and after we signed the bill they took our land and cut down our allowance of food.

The commission made us believe that we would get full sacks if we signed the bill, but instead of that our sacks are empty. We lost considerable property by being here with the commissioners last year and have never got anything for it. Our chickens were all stolen; our cattle some of them were killed. Our crops were entirely lost by us being absent here with the Sioux Commission, and we have never been benefited one bit by the bill, and in fact we are worse off than we were before we signed the bill.

We are told if we do as white men we will be better off, but we are getting worse off every year.

The commissioners promised the Indians living on Black Pipe and Pass Creeks that if they signed the bill they could remain where they were and draw their rations at this agency, showing them on the map the line, and our people want them here, but they have been ordered to move back to Rosebud Agency. This is one of the broken promises. The commission promised to survey the boundary line and appropriate \$1,000 for the purpose, but it has not been done. When we were at Washington, the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Commissioner all promised us that we would get the 1,000,000 pounds of beef that was taken from us, and I heard the bill appropriating the money passed Congress, but we never got the beef. The Commissioner refused to give it to us. American Horse, Fast Thunder, and Spotted Horse were all promised a spring wagon each, but they have never heard anything of it. This is another broken promise.

After American Horse was through talking I asked the other men present if his statement voiced their sentiments, and they all answered yes. It seems now that some of the Indians are trying to account for this ghost-dance craze by saying that the Government has not fulfilled the promises made by their several representatives in the past while at this agency, and also those made by the President and other officials at Washington.

I write this to you so that you may be fully advised of the feeling that exists among some of the Indians that signed the late Sioux bill, and as you are fully informed of what has been done and what has *not been done* for these people in the past you will understand and act accordingly.

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

D. F. ROYER,  
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. E. V. BELT,  
Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D. C.