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RUFEE, C.A.
CHIPPEWAS

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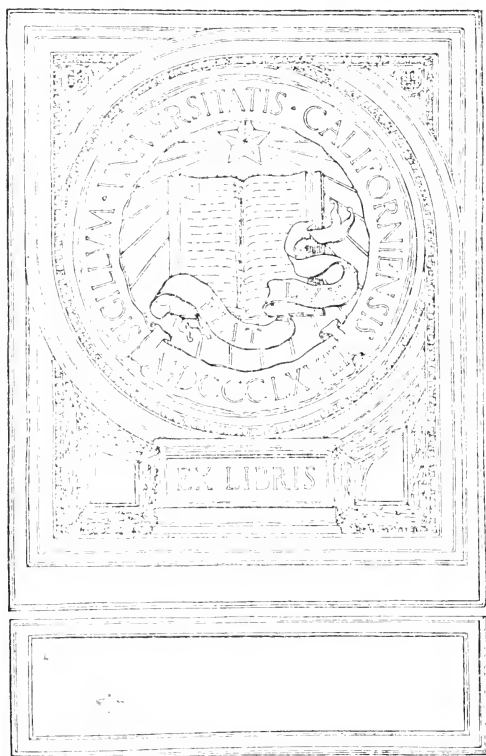
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REPORT

OF THE

CONDITION

OF THE

CHIPPEWAS OF MINNESOTA,

BY C. A. RUFFEE.

JANUARY, 1875.

~~REPORT OF~~
~~THE~~
~~COMMISSIONER OF~~
~~THE BUREAU OF~~
~~INDIAN AFFAIRS~~

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STATE OF MINNESOTA,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
ST. PAUL, MAY 21st, 1874. }

CHARLES A. RUFFEE, ESQ,

Brainerd, Minn.

Under a concurrent resolution of the Legislature of this State, adopted at the last session, the Governor was requested to take action in the manner therein indicated, in regard to the Chippewa Indians, etc.

Knowing your intimate acquaintance with that tribe and the high regard and confidence in which they hold you, I request that you will undertake to make the inquiries indicated.

You will please embrace in your inquiries the following topics:

First: What is their present condition?

Second: Have the treaty stipulations been observed by the United States? If not, state in what particulars. Under this head I particularly wish to be informed whether the moneys which these treaties promise for the purpose of breaking land, furnishing seed and agricultural implements, building houses and generally to put in their hands any instrumentalities which may facilitate their acquirement of the habits of civilization, have been faithfully expended. If not, state in detail any delinquency in any respect—giving full information.

Third: What grievances, if any, exist and whether they will in your judgment result in any disturbance? Under this head you are particularly instructed to inform me respecting the contracts which are said to have been made concerning the timber on the reservations, giving me the version of the Indians as to these transactions.

Fourth: Your own views derived from your inquiries as to the legislation necessary to aid and encourage them in adopting the habits and industries of civilization with a view to their remaining inhabitants and ultimately becoming citizens of this State.

In general you will inquire and report on all topics fairly within the scope of the annexed resolution.

There is a further duty which I wish you to undertake in the same connection. It is to use your influence to prevent the acts of personal violence and depredations upon property, which in times past have cost the State thousands of dollars in rewards, expenses of arrest and prosecution, (often fruitless) military expeditions, special agents for temporary purposes, etc.

I am satisfied that these can be prevented by the friendly interposition and council of some one in whom the Indians have confidence.

You will, of course, be careful to respect the laws of the United States in regard to "talks" or council with these people—in the sense in which they are prohibited by those laws.

You will make full report to me by December 1st, 1874.

Your reasonable expenses and a reasonable compensation for your services will be paid by the State. For this, you will have to wait until the next session, as the Legislature did not last winter place any funds at my disposal for these purposes.

You are not authorized to employ any assistants except by special instructions from this department.

C. K. DAVIS,
Governor.

Mr. Ward offered the following concurrent resolution :

Resolved, By the Senate (the House concurring): That His Excellency the Governor of Minnesota be and is hereby requested to make or cause to be made an enquiry into the condition of the several bands of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota, to the end that he may recommend to the Legislature at its next session such Legislation as shall appear requisite or desirable for the aid and encouragement of these Indians, in adopting the industries and habits of civilization, with a view to their remaining as inhabitants and ultimately becoming citizens of the State.

That the Governor be also requested to inquire into what extent the white settlers, living on the frontier adjoining the reservations of the different bands of Chippewa and Sioux Indians, are endangered by the encroachment of said bands upon the settlements of this State, by reason of the present state of affairs among said Indians, and report at an early day of this session.

To His Excellency C. K. Davis, Governor of Minnesota.

In compliance with the instructions accompanying your letter of date May 21st, 1874, requesting me to ascertain and report concerning the condition of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota, I have the honor to submit the following as the result of the inquiries made by me in that regard :

The several subjects of inquiry to which my attention was especially directed by those instructions, embraced matters vitally important to the Indian, and of grave moment to the State, and I have endeavored to obtain such facts as will enable you to form a correct opinion of the present condition of their relation to the Commonwealth. These several matters are herein referred to separately as indicated in my instructions, viz :

FIRST.

“What is their present condition?”

The total number of Chippewa Indians within this State comprises about 12,000, located as follows: About 6,000 upon Lake Superior and waters tributary thereto. Upon the Mississippi and its tributaries 4,000, and in Red River Valley 2,000. The Territory set apart by Treaty between the United States and Chippewa Indians as Reservations, comprises about 16,000 square miles, and located in the counties of Lake, St. Louis, Carlton, Mille Lacs, Cass, Becker, Pembina, Polk and Beltrami.

Nine-tenths of this area is densely timbered with Pine, Maple, Oak, Birch and Aspen, and other kinds of wood found in that latitude. The soil may be generally characterized as a sandy loam, with clay or gravel sub soil, except a part of the White Earth and Red Lake Reservations, which is a rich loam and capable of producing an abundant growth of vegetables and cereals.

The Indians upon these several reservations, with the exception of those at White Earth, live in wigwams, constructed in the primitive manner so well known, affording but poor protection from the elements, and none of the conveniences essential to a civilized life, and are clad only with the blanket and breech-clout, and with the exception above noted, I am unable to find any evidence of an improved condition with these Indians of a social, moral or industrial character, over that existing twenty years ago. They depend *entirely* upon such annuities as they receive from the general government and upon the game and fish which abound upon and near their reservations for their subsistence, while labor or the products of systematic industry forms no part of their reliance for the maintenance of themselves.

That this condition cannot be changed for the better, or that these Indians are incapable of improvement, cannot be maintained, for upon the White Earth reservation are

found several hundred, who six years ago were as repulsive in all their habits and characteristics, and apparently as intractable as any in the State, but who now live in comfortable dwellings; are clad in the habits of their civilized neighbors; own, possess and care for personal property; successfully cultivate with their own labor large tracts, and produce by their own industry sufficient to supply themselves with most of the necessities of civilized life.

When it is remembered that the Indians upon Leech Lake, Mille Lac and White Oak Point reservations are, and long have been, nominally the recipients of the same care and beneficiaries under similar treaties with those now upon White Earth reservation, the contrast in their present condition seems inexplicable to those wanting the opportunity of personal observation, and the reason therefor must be sought in other sources than the wisdom of existing laws or their judicious administration.

That similar beneficent results would follow, were the same or similar means used for the reformation of the Indians outside the White Earth Reservation, as has been so effective with them, there seems no good reason to doubt; and it must be confessed that the progress made by the Indians upon the White Earth Reservation is attributable to the wise counsels and kindly interest practically manifested by benevolent and Christian associations, to and for them, rather than to the fidelity with which the government has executed its self imposed trusts through its chosen agents. This is apparent from the fact that in all matters pertaining to their moral or material welfare, these Indians invariably seek counsel of the representatives of those individuals and associations who have by their acts demonstrated their disinterested friendship for and good will toward them, and by the earnest efforts they make to profit by the counsels so considerably given, while no practical benefits can be found resulting from long years of official intercourse.

While at White Earth a laudable interest is manifested by the Indians to obtain for their children the benefits of

schools, upon the other Reservations no disposition to avail themselves of the provision made by the government for education is exhibited. Among the former the rights of property is generally respected, and with the latter little or no ambition to acquire it for themselves by any legitimate means, or respect its ownership if found within their reach.

The moral sentiment of the Indians, uninstructed by the light of civilization, is of a low standard, and little or no improvement is observable in that regard among the Indians upon the several Reservations, except those at White Earth, and their intercourse with the white race since they became pensioners upon the Government seems to have satisfied them but little, unless the contact has impressed them with a wholesome fear of the white man's power and superiority, and so restrained them in some degree from the full exercise of their savage and barbarous instincts; but in no manner are they better prepared for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship than before they shared the bounties of the Government.

They possess neither dwellings, clothing, household furniture, food or implements of labor; they live in wigwams resting upon the naked earth, dependent upon such game as they may chance to procure, for their sustenance, making no provision for the future. Covered with filthy blankets, or destitute of all clothing, indolent and indifferent to their own condition, hopeful only that the Great Father will increase their annuities. Such is the present condition of at least 10,000 of the 12,000 Indians in this State, the exceptions being those already mentioned upon the White Earth Reservation, and some members of the Red Lake Bands.

SECOND.

“Have the treaty stipulations been observed by the United States? If not state in what particulars. Under this head I particularly wish to be informed whether the money which these treaties promise for the purpose of breaking lands, furnishing seed and agricultural implements, building houses, and generally to put in their hands any instrumentalities which may facilitate their acquirement of the habits of civilization, have been faithfully expended. If not state in detail any delinquency in any respect—giving full information.”

I have been unable to find any satisfactory data from which to obtain the facts, necessary to a full answer to the queries submitted in this instruction.

On application to the persons in charge at the several agencies I was informed that no records, vouchers or accounts were kept at these agencies showing the disbursements made under the several treaties, nor the manner or extent which the government had performed or discharged its undertakings toward these Indians provided for by treaty! That each agent or person locally representing the government, upon leaving his position, took with him all matters pertaining to his administration; that the several accounts were none of them examined or audited at the local agency, but were kept and adjusted exclusively at the Department at Washington; hence it was impossible for me, with the limited time allowed, to make that critical examination of the records and accounts at Washington necessary to determine whether treaty stipulations had been faithfully kept and observed; and my only available source of information was that of personal observation and the statement of persons presumed to have knowledge of those matters; and to that end I have consulted different persons whose statements I deemed re-

liable, and whose opportunity for information I deemed such as to render their knowledge important.

There are large numbers of mixed bloods connected by blood with the Indians, who were a party to the Treaty of May 7, 1864. A majority of these mixed bloods reside upon the Reservations.

Article 11, of said Treaty, provides that "Whenever the services of laborers are required upon the Reservation, preference should be given to full or mixed bloods, if they shall be found competent to perform them."

These mixed bloods are poor and entirely dependent upon their physical labor for the support of themselves and families; are able bodied and competent to perform all the services ordinarily required of laborers, and manifest a willingness to work whenever they can. They generally assert that employment under the provisions of the Treaty above cited, is denied them; that white laborers are employed to their exclusion, and I am satisfied that the Treaty has heretofore been almost wholly disregarded in that respect.

It will readily occur to you that not only would its observance be beneficial to the mixed bloods in affording them employment and remuneration, but also that it is of vital importance when it is considered that this class of people are, by the usages of society, isolated and excluded from most opportunities of employment so accessible to the white laborer.

From the best information within my reach I find, that during the six years last past, there has been appropriated by the United States, and reported by its agents as expended for the Indians located upon the Mille Lacs, White Oak Point, Leech Lake, Red Lake and White Earth Reservations, the several total sums following, to-wit :

For dwelling houses, about,	-	-	-	\$11,000
For breaking and clearing land, about,	-	-	-	58,500
For Agricultural Implements, about,	-	-	-	5,000
For Cattle, about,	-	-	-	14,000
For Roads and Bridges, about,	-	-	-	18,500
For Schools, about,	-	-	-	50,000

Making the total amount nominally expended upon these Reservations in the six years for the purposes above specified, \$157,000.

During this time there has been constructed for the Indians upon these several Reservations by the United States twenty-four log houses, which competent mechanics estimated cost at the time they were built \$200 each; in this time there has been cleared and broken 300 acres of land, prairie, at an actual cost of \$2500; the value of Agricultural Implements furnished by the United States to the Indians, I am unable to ascertain; nor the number or value of cattle supplied.

There has been constructed 240 miles of Road at an actual cost of \$18,500, including Bridges.

There has been annually employed two or more teachers engaged in superintending the schools upon the Reservations; the amount actually disbursed for this purpose I cannot ascertain.

This department of my inquiries has been, for the reasons indicated, a difficult one to determine, and the results of my labors in that regard are not satisfactory to myself; but I could not do more without access to and examination of official records beyond my reach.

THIRD.

“What grievances, if any, exist and whether they will in your judgment result in any disturbance? Under this head you are particularly instructed to inform me respecting the contracts which are said to have been made concerning the timber on the reservations, giving me the version of the Indians as to these transactions.”

To justly determine “what grievances exist” among these Indians is a grave matter, and one upon which good men, long familiar with them, would seriously differ. The Indian is ever disposed to complain, and often times without cause.

Why these Indians, who have been the proteges of the Government for a score of years, and have been the recipients of liberal bounties, in grants and annuities, have been the special objects of missionary and philanthropic efforts, have been tutored in the elements of civilization by experts chosen therefore, and have been largely in contact with their civilized white neighbors, should still remain the savage, ignorant, filthy and degraded beings they were before these opportunities for improvement were afforded them, is a question difficult to answer.

After a careful consideration of the matter, aided by several years observation and a personal acquaintance with the intercourse of the Government and the Indians, I believe much force should be allowed to the general accusation made by the Indians of a want of fidelity on the part of those who have represented the Government in the discharge of their trusts. It is claimed with great unanimity by all the Indians upon and west of the Mississippi river, that the Treaty undertakings have not been observed by the Government; that the money appropriated had not been properly applied; that the annuity goods and provisions have been deficient in quantity, and defective in quality; that buildings have not been erected

either in number or character as promised; that land has not been prepared for cultivation as agreed; that seed and agricultural implements have not been furnished; that much of their substance is consumed, and their money expended in supporting white persons upon their reservations, nominally employees for the performance of duties they could, and gladly would discharge, and that large sums of money set apart by Treaty for their use and benefit has never been applied in any manner to the promotion of their interest, but has been stolen or misappropriated by the Agents of the United States.

They also complain of the fact that they are never informed or allowed by the agents to know *how* and *for what purpose* their money is disbursed.

It cannot be denied that many of these complaints, if not all, are well founded, and that these Indians have long been despoiled of their legitimate rights by those whose duty it was especially to protect them; and they have become so imbued with the conviction that they are regarded only as objects of prey, that they look with suspicion upon all official propositions affecting their welfare, fearful lest they may be again victimized, and their condition become more helpless and unendurable.

This spirit and feeling of distrust has been harbored until, instead of looking upon the Government as a benefactor and friend, they have come to regard it rather as hostile to their interest, and seeking to take advantage of their helplessness and necessities; so that there exists no feeling of confidence and trust between the Indians and Agents.

A fair exposition of this feeling among the Indians is expressed in a speech made by the Chief Wab-bon-o-quet, to Inspector Daniels, at the White Earth Reservation, May, 1874, a copy of which is hereto attached and marked Exhibit "A," and which was fully discussed and approved by the chiefs and head men of the nation in council, before it was delivered, and is an authorized statement of their grievances, upon the matters therein referred to.

As I have heretofore intimated, another cause of complaint which I believe to be well founded, is, that the United States agents neglect and refuse to employ as laborers those persons connected with the Indians by blood, as stipulated in the Treaty. Nearly all the manual labor performed upon the Reservations requires but little skill, and could be as well done by the mixed bloods as by the white men employed for that purpose, and fed and paid from the funds of these Indians.

This refusal of employment tends to discourage these people and deprive them of the only source of earning a livelihood within their reach, as well as to tax them with an unnecessary expense; leaving them in their idleness to acquire habits of vice and intemperance, and so become an element of discord and reproach.

It is also charged directly, and I believe it susceptible of proof, that several of the buildings upon the White Earth Reservation, built partly with the labor of mixed-bloods, and partly with public funds, for the use and occupancy of the mixed-bloods who mainly built them, were, by a late agent, now holding a high position under the government, charged to the persons who built them, and pay demanded therefor by the agent; that being without money with which to satisfy the demand, these mixed-bloods, upon the urgent request of the agent, delivered to him in payment of their houses, Red Lake Half-Breed scrip, issued to them under the Treaty of April 12th, 1864. The Indians further complain that goods and provisions which, by the Treaties, belonged to them, have been made subjects of traffic by some of the agents, and they required to pay exorbitant prices for what was their own without price, thus not only robbing them, but making them pay for the theft.

It has been the practice during the last year for the local agents, under instructions from the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to withhold a portion of the *money* due the Indians as a part of their annuities under their Treaties, and expend the amount so withheld for such pur-

poses as the agent in charge may deem to the interest of the Indians, and this, too, without consulting or advising with them.

The Indians complain that by the conditions of the Treaties they are entitled to a specific sum in money, and that the agent has no right, without their consent, to appropriate or dispose of this money otherwise than in the manner required by the Treaty; and that the investment of this money by the agent is an unauthorized assumption, and to their prejudice; that they should be allowed to at least direct *how* their money should be expended, and be permitted to share the *profits* of the investment, if deprived of the use of the principal.

In the matter of the so called "Pine Contracts" I have made diligent inquiry, and have personally conversed with the head chiefs representing the Indians interested, concerning the matter; and without exception they assert they were never consulted in regard to the contracts; that they never consented thereto, and never directly or indirectly authorized any person or persons to represent them in any way or manner; and they all protest if such contracts exist, they are no party to them, but that it is an attempt to further rob them of what they deem to be their own property.

I need not state that the Indians are jealous of what they conceive to be their rights; that within this State there is little left them of available value except the pine forests growing upon their reservations; that they have been led to believe that this could not be taken from them without their consent; that they believe they have a right to be heard in the matter, and that to take possession of their forests without their consent, they consider a violation of the obligations of the Government on the one part, and a demonstration of their belief that the Government no longer seeks or desires to protect them in the possession of that which has, by solemn Treaty, been set apart for their use and benefit.

The amount of pine timber included in the so-called

Wilder contract, as estimated by persons who have examined it, and are competent to judge, exceeds 1,000,000,000 feet. It is located upon the Leech Lake Reservation, upon waters tributary to the Mississippi River, and comprises the largest body of pine timber within the State.

No transaction in a long series of years has elicited so much feeling, and engendered so much ill will toward the Government as the pine contracts, (and it is well known to you that on several occasions violent and serious difficulty in consequence thereof has only been averted by the prudent interposition of persons disconnected with the Government, for whose counsel the Indians had more than an ordinary respect), and at the present time this matter forms a leading topic in all their counsels, and is prolific of earnest discussion and angry feeling. Whatever the legal rights of the Indians may be in the premises, they feel that a great wrong has been done them, which the Government tacitly approves and refuses to redress.

Could a satisfactory explanation of this matters be made to these Indians, one of the greatest causes of present complaint would be removed; for they look upon this as a wholesale swindle, compared with which other official dir-elections are mere peccadillos.

You will see from what I have stated that the Indians disclaim all knowledge of the contracts, until after they were alleged to have been consummated; and I believe such to be the fact; and what I have stated of the "Wilder Contracts" of Leech Lake, so far as the views of the Indians are affected, is true of the contracts for the pine upon the Red Lake Reservation; though a less number of Indians claim to be interested in the latter than in the former, and less general excitement results in consequence thereof, while the dissatisfaction is equally great and the opposition equally determined.

In my judgment this feeling of injury should be appeased by candid and full explanation to the Indians of the entire transaction, and such amends be made as equity and fair dealing demand; believing, as I do that such a course

would tend to quell the turbulent spirit now so dominant, and greatly pacify the irritation resulting from this real or imagined wrong, and peaceably avert impending trouble.

If this is not done, and no violence is committed in consequence, it will be rather through a fear of the greater evils in the power of the government to inflict upon them, than because they do not deem the provocation sufficient.

FOURTH.

"Your own views, derived from your inquiries, as to the legislation necessary to aid and encourage them in adopting the habits and industries of civilization, with a view to their remaining inhabitants and ultimately becoming citizens of this State."

"In general you will enquire and report on all topics fairly within the scope of the annexed resolution."

The moral and material welfare of these Indians is, and so long as they occupy so large a tract of territory will continue to be, of grave moment to the State, aside from all philanthropic considerations; for 12,000 indigent people in the midst of any community is a serious incumbrance, and few questions of more importance can be suggested, than that of how to devise means and measures for the amelioration of their condition, so that their presence among us will be productive of general good instead of a source of increasing evil.

If the Indians are to remain within the State, most certainly their future welfare is largely identified with the citizen, and whatever tends to promote antagonisms and cause ill-will between the races, is prejudicial alike to both; so that it would seem that any measures tending to facilitate the civilization of the Indian on the one part, and

to enlist a kindly interest in his well-being upon the other, should receive the approbation of all good citizens.

It cannot be denied that the present policy pursued by the general government toward these Indians, effectually teaches them dependence rather than self-reliance, and impresses them with the idea that they are regarded as unworthy of the confidence of their white neighbors, and incapable of forming or exercising an opinion concerning their own affairs; while it has been practically demonstrated that, under the the patronage and with the aid of counsel adapted to their condition, these same Indians are capable of acquiring habits of industry and a knowledge of and ability to discharge the duties of citizens.

This may be seen to-day upon the White Earth Reservation, among those Indians who have been permitted to act, to a great degree, under the guidance of Bishop Whipple; and I can conceive no reason why, what has been productive of so much good in the case of these few, should not be equally effective with all.

Subject any class to arbitrary measures, imposed by strangers; exclude them from all voice in the administration of their own affairs; assume that they are rogues and vagabonds, and treat them as such; deprive them of all opportunity of self-culture or independent action, and subject them to the varying whims of some political partisan or conceited bigot, whose only zeal is to promote that of his patron or increase the perquisites of his office, and refuse them all means of legal redress, and the effect will be found well illustrated in the present condition of the great majority of the annuity Indians in this State.

What legislation will remedy existing evils, and tend to aid and encourage these Indians in adopting the habits and industries of civilization, is, to a great extent, a matter of speculation, and concerning which those who have made it a subject of special study, seriously differ.

Viewed with such light as I have, I am of opinion that existing laws administered as they now are, are wholly inadequate to effect these desirable ends; that as a rule the

representatives of the government manifest no interest in these objects, and do nothing toward their accomplishment

If it is practicable to place these Indians under the control of the authorities of the State, and bring them into more intimate relations with the law making power, extending by legislative enactments the protection of the law, and establishing police regulations adapted to their wants and condition, so as to afford them the assurance that they are alike protected by and amenable to the law, I believe it would be conducive of much good; in that it would make them the subjects of legislative care in common with other denizens of the State; would allow the local government to determine the policy to be pursued toward those within its territorial limits, and place in the power of those immediately interested, to provide by suitable legislation such measures as the necessities of the case might demand, as well as to give the execution of such measures to those who were locally identified with the general welfare.

These Indians, as they are now situated, are fully conscious of their isolated condition, and realize that they are ostracized and regarded as having no legal rights or political status whatever, and feel little incentive toward improvement while they are held in social and political bondage; they also, and I think with some reason, consider themselves esteemed by the Government as legitimate objects of spoil; for during long years of mal-administration, and in utter disregard of their protests and prayers, not a single person representing the Government has been called to an account, nor have they once been vouchsafed a hearing upon the subject of their numerous grievances. If they were objects of the care and supervision of the State, these things could not pass unheeded, for injustice to the Indian would then be a violation of a home obligation, and public sentiment would then insist upon a remedy in its own interest.

If these Indians are to remain within the State, I am of opinion that the State should have control of their affairs,

not only as regards their material interests, but also their political and social status; and so far as I can learn the Indians themselves desire that they should be exclusively in charge of the local government which they inhabit.

If this should be done, it would doubtless result in some mode of representation through which the Indians could be heard, and lead to a better knowledge and understanding of their wants and the interest of the public in that regard.

I am of the further opinion that these Indians should be subject to one and the same general policy of government, and so far as practicable, should be concentrated in one community; that no discrimination should be made; that reasonable requirements should be insisted upon, and offenders properly punished. In my judgment the Indians now in the Valley of the Mississippi should be removed to the White Earth Reservation, a tract well adapted to their use, rich in all the elements of agricultural wealth, and sufficiently extensive to support 30,000 souls.

Under proper influences such removal could be effected without serious opposition from the Indians.

If the course I have indicated could be adopted toward these Indians, I am of opinion their condition would rapidly improve in all respects, and in a short time they would become fitted for the duties of citizens, for of their *capacity* I have no doubt; and I am equally positive that the State cannot reasonably expect any advancement so long as the present policy controls their management.

In general these Indians possess an innate respect for the moral virtues, and in their own savage code are found abundant evidences of their intuitive perceptions of right and wrong as applied to their intercourse with each other.

In their domestic relations infidelity is rare, and no people entertain stronger affection for their offspring, or are more firmly attached by the ties of blood than the Chipewas. In their relations with each other they are generous and candid, and fraudulent practices among them are unknown. Physically they possess stalwart, hardy frames, and are capable of great endurance.

As a people they are easily attracted by the forms and ceremonies of Sectarian Religion, and often times formally accept the creed of some zealous Missionary without understanding the obligations they so assume; hence nominal conversions to Christianity are not always attended with those lasting results desired.

If fairly dealt with I believe there is no danger of violence from these Indians toward the white settlers; and most of the outrages attributed to them in the last few years, if ferried out, will be found not to have originated altogether with them.

They feel that they have been deeply injured and outraged by the treatment they have received from some of their agents, and that the government does them an injustice in refusing to give their complaints a hearing, but I have been unable to discover any general disposition to revenge their wrongs upon the settlers. Occasionally some turbulent spirit among them threatens to take summary vengeance, but the excitement so created is ordinarily quelled by prudent counsel.

For several years the Indians upon Leech Lake and White Earth Reservations have persistently argued that a large sum of money was unaccounted for to them, but which was due under the Treaties, and the silence of their Agents has confirmed them in the belief that they have been wilfully defrauded.

This amount is asserted by them to exceed the sum of \$75,000, and if it has been properly expended it is but a simple matter to show the fact, and so set at rest forever one of the most palpable causes of complaint. From such information as I have been able to obtain, without the aid of official records, I conclude their claim is not wholly unfounded.

During this year no depredations of importance have been committed by the Chippewas, though on one or more occasions serious trouble has seemed imminent in consequence of the dissatisfaction felt on account of the sale of their pine; and was only averted by the interposition of citizens whose counsel was respected.

It has always been customary with these Indians to seek game and fur-bearing animals upon territory not included in their reservations, and until within a few years, little or no complaint has been made of it; but lately the settlers manifest alarm whenever the Indian is discovered near, and in consequence the Indians have been more strictly confined to their reservations, so that they are now seldom met outside of the prescribed limits; and whenever I have heard of Indians upon ceded lands, I have taken opportunity to prevail upon them to return home. In this matter the United States Agents have been very watchful, and done much in keeping those inclined to wander away, at their respective agencies.

I have not been able to visit personally this year the Indians of the Lake Superior Agency, and what I have said of them has been from data obtained from such sources as were accessible, and from previous observation.

I desire here to acknowledge the uniform courtesy I have received at the hands of all those officially connected with the Indians with whom I have come in contact while prosecuting my inquiries in this matter, and to add that the absence of all records and accounts hereinbefore referred to, is not chargeable to any default of those in whose custody they might be presumed, but is in accordance with a recognized usage of the Indian Department.

In conclusion, permit me to say that I am fully conscious this report is unsatisfactory in its meagre exhibits of statistical matter, but the defect could not be supplied without recourse to data beyond my reach; that in other respects I have endeavored to present plain facts as I have obtained them; that the suggestions that I have made are derived from my observations, and much to the approval of others more competent, perhaps, to properly advise than myself.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

C. A. RUFFEE.

Dec. 1, 1874.

EXHIBIT "A."

We saw you yesterday and you told us who you were and what was the object of your visit. It was with pleasure your words were heard about our future. I thought the day had come when a man was sent who pitied and would listen to us. I will now review the past and tell how the Chippewas have been treated. I will go back to the old time. Then before the whites came we were a happy people. Since the whites came everything has drifted away from us. From the time we ceded the first land we have drifted to poverty, starvation and death. Poverty still follows us. The name of Christian is powerful, and there is nothing our Great Father cannot do. You represent the Great Father, and we see in you all his strength. Compare yourself with me. You have intelligence and learning; what have I? Nothing except what I learn through my ears and eyes. When our Great Father gets us together we cede land—give all into his hands depending on him to find us our provisions and get us our annuities. From the ceding of lands poverty has been chasing us and is still chasing us. I fear that when the Great Father has taken away everything, then he will chastise us and send us to the Bad Lands. This fear is a stumbling block in our way and we can go no further. When I look at the power of my Great Father and then look at our poverty and the poverty of our children, though the name of Christian is powerful, it seems as if the power of Religious Association could not drive it away. Now you have come to see us as we are—you have found what you wished. Many letters have been written, but it cannot be put in black and white as well as you can see with your eyes, how our funds have been expended. You have

come just at the right time to see what must give us a living here after farming. We wish you to have positive proof and whatever we say we will point out the proofs.

Mr. Warren was in Washington with us when stipulations were made as to carrying on the reservation. We were told there would be \$6,000 a year to help such as would work.

What you told us yesterday you had done among the Sioux is what we wanted here but could not get. \$25,000 was received for allowing Otter Tail Indians upon our reservation. Have tried to advise about spending it. Have never been allowed to counsel about expenditure. Last year received \$25,000 for Pembina tract. We wanted voice in disposition of it, but were not listened to. Seeing how our young men were going to work we tried to have a fund of \$5,000 set aside to help them or for an emergency. We wanted it put in the hands of the Bishop, but it was not allowed, and we have nothing now. There are many of our young men who have not adopted the white men's ways yet, and we wanted to advise with them, and asked for a council house to meet in, but could not get it. We want to start in agriculture.

We know what it is to be our own independence. They gave us small cattle and no plows and then told us to go to work. Last fall there was much grain sold. Our cattle were too small; the horses were disposed of, and when we wanted plowing done this spring, we got the same answer. I must have misunderstood in Washington because we cannot get the \$6,000 set aside. If they would listen to us it would be better; but they never take our advice but go ahead as they think proper. When we saw we had no resources we asked help from our annuity. We are not at a loss to work. We know how to plow, and to drive and hoe. If more confidence was placed in us we could live better. No wonder I cannot turn my face to our friends because our progress is so slow. We have not the things to do with. I have told you why our progress is so slow, and now another thing I want to mention. We wish to

ask if any wheat raised here from agricultural fund does not belong to us? If so why should we take it to our credit? Our father went to buy flour—here is a sample of flour. Our Father bought it below cost—nine dollars—some say not nine dollar flour. Have to pay \$30 per barrel for pork. When we take from traders they sell cheaper. Perhaps Great Father wants to get rich sooner than trader.

We lay no blame, only state what is transpiring. We wish you to know exactly how we are. Generally our Great Father sends big men. They come up—find condition of Indians. Make many papers for benefit of Indians. Then see agent, and he puts pieces of green paper in their eyes, and when they go back papers never come up. The flour raised here was issued to us; our agent got flour to replace it. Whom does it belong to? Little while after we heard that the timber was sold we were keeping for our children. I alluded to our Great Father stripping us. When we heard our Great Father was taking the timber without asking us it frightened us; we are frightened yet. We fear he wishes us to be unruly so as to send us off. It is worth asking for if it is worth buying. It is right to ask us before selling anything that belongs to us. I never ceded land and tried to take it back. The Great Father always has asked and should have done it this time. We have had talks with Pillagers to see if they have had talks about selling pine. None of them have ever sold the pine. That is what we feared. We are not pleased to have it sold without permission. We want to keep it as a fund for our young men. Now we wish you could see the Pillagers and hear them say just what we say here to-day.

Should you ever hear that the pine was sold with the consent of the Indians it was done in a corner, and not in open council. Think it was wrong for agent to have disposed of our horses. Have been trying to have done for us as you did for Sioux. If any encouragement was given to those who work all would work.

We know your time is precious, that you are in a hurry on account of your dinner; we are not anxious having no

dinner. You know we have not the knowledge to read and write as white men. Be always lenient with us, because on account of our ignorance we can make no memorandums and are, therefore, liable to mistakes. I have asked about the \$25,000 from Pembina, and the \$25,000 from Otter Tail, \$50,000 in all. The reason I ask about that money is that when inquiries are made by my people I cannot explain to them. When I have asked about that fund I did so because I wanted to help the Indians who have never known how much was left of it, or anything about it. What troubles us, we do not know how our affairs are managed, and cannot make amount of work done and money meet. We always feel thankful when our Great Father extends a helping hand to us, but we want to know how it is expended. We know our wants better than strangers.

If all the work has been done with the \$6,000, then the \$25,000 is yet unexpended. Perhaps it has gone back to the big box of the Great Father. We have signed many vouchers and will sign no more until we know about the \$25,000. You have taught us to come to business, and business is business; when we touch the pen we must know what it is for. You see how blind we are. We thought the teams were to be fed from the harvest. Where did the oats go to? About the \$6,000, we know that it is a small matter. We wish to say to you that we were glad to hear that the beloved Bishop was to take charge of us. We will work hard and strive hard not to disappoint him in any way. You can see at yonder church what he has done for our spiritual welfare, and what progress we have made. Not satisfied with that he is now striving for our temporal welfare. Who can return what has been done for us by our beloved Bishop? He has brought us from darkness to light. Our faults have never discouraged him. When hungry he has fed us, and when in trouble advised us, and no tongue can express what we feel for him. That in his being put over us, there has been some dispensation of Providence, none can question. His hand has always been stretched out for us. May the Great Spirit long

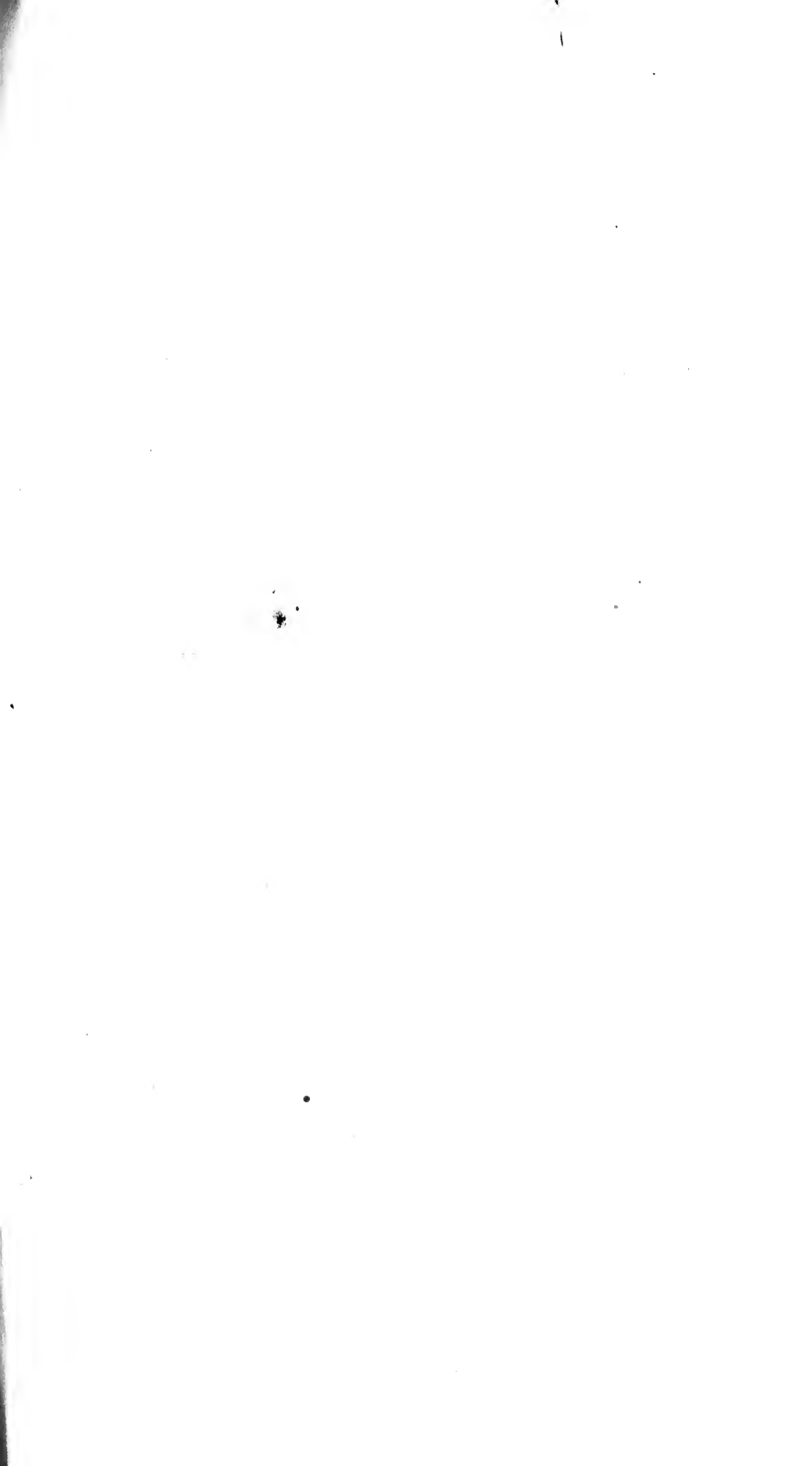
spare him to us. You can see how he has helped us. Though we were trying to help ourselves he was not satisfied, but sent us plows, oxens, cows, hoes, seeds and many necessary things. Who but a father would have done all this? He built us a church and then a hospital. No one knows or can see the end, for his hand still keeps pushing us on. We are not blind to what is done for us. You will visit many places in your travels. Notice Leech Lake where the kindness of the Bishop has not reached. They have had many missionaries and much money, but nothing is done where he is not. They all say that when the Bishop's influence comes among them they will be as we are. The power of that saving influence has not reached many of them. Let the government be lenient until the same influence that has been with us has been with all. Pity our needs. Pity our kindred. To find fault with us will always be in place here, for we have been tried and have been given opportunities. Those that have not been tried do not judge too harshly. Pity them if they leave their reservation and get into trouble. They cannot subsist without game, and there is no game on their reservation; always bear in mind that they have had no such start as we. We are all sinking and dwindling away. From the time of first cession dates the loss of our chieftianship. Then wasted from our hands all power. We ask now for pity, and aid to help the good desired. Can you question the respect we have for the Great Father and the whites? Do you know my idea and the ideas of those about me? It is that the Great Father cannot be ignorant of these things, and we expect that he will help us to support our children. When cessions were made we used to have a consideration given us. We did not know the Master of Life, nor the many customs that we now do, but money was kept in trust for our benefit. In putting this money that was held in trust, in the hands of persons or agents to care for us, there have been many made rich by collusion and measures of dishonesty. From many getting rich on the mere pittance of \$1,500 a year, we have been led to

believe that we have been tampered with, and that unmercifully. When our Great Father found he could not obtain proper men for our agents, he made up his mind to try religious societies. You cannot imagine what feelings of surprise it caused us that after a clergyman was appointed our agent, we found our property being taken away without even our consent being asked. When the first agent of a religious society was sent to us we had an idea that something was wrong. The next was a minister. He found a great deal of help to begin with. \$20,000, from Government. Same time he found \$57,000 removal money. After the last amount named they found a band of Indians at Otter Tail Lake not included in Treaty who had no reservation, and no means of living except by fishing. To make a home for them on this reservation \$25,000 was given us. We were then advancing a little toward our present life, and we thought by taking some of our lands for the Otter Tails and receiving a fund it would be for the greater benefit of all. But we wanted a voice in the expending of that money. Some time after we were asked to allow the Pembina Indians a home on this reservation, and another sum of \$25,000 was given. The first money received for the home of the Otter Tails had taught us a lesson. No voice had been allowed us in the expenditure of it, and we thought should ever a similar case come around we would remember it. That same \$50,000 of money has gone, and we cannot tell where it has gone to. That is exactly what we want to know, and we want to see all the papers in regard to it. You remember the last agent said he had expended but the \$6,000; I am without prejudice, but make this demand to know how the money has been expended. I should be very much surprised to hear that this money had gone back into the Treasury. Then again this matter of the pine sale. When we heard our pine had been sold without consulting us, I cried and prayed it might not be wrested from us without our consent. It is a great point with us. Let it go and what have we left us Chippewa

Indians? Nothing. The pine sold is as much ours as this reservation; that is why we should have been consulted. When we came on this reservation we were told by the Great Father that when land belonged to us it could not be taken from us unless we were willing to part with it. We consider no bargain valid unless we have had a voice in the matter; not good unless we have consented. We ask you to see that this matter is redressed for us. Will you blame me if I had the thought that a minister should be above fraud. Here stands the minister of God, says he comes here to take care of the Indians. Who is his God? Is he a greenback? That is what I am led to believe in my ignorance. Instead of worshiping God; worshiping a greenback. I know the man who has led us to life. When I look right I can see before me always the man who leads, and that man is the Bishop. He leads us to life. He has done all we think.

As for myself, as I look through that window, I see those white clouds; I am named White Cloud, and I pray God to keep my heart as white as those clouds to help those under me.

I pray that never may any temptation take me from the duty I owe my tribe and all men.



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