

Denver, Colo.
July 10, 1922.

William M. McGowan,
Toppenish, Wash.

Dear Will:

This is a rather delayed confirmation of my two wires from Washington relative to my interviews with Commissioner Burke and Secretary Fall. I heard out of Washington on Wednesday afternoon after having seen the last of the parties mentioned in your wire and have been moving since about as rapidly as the mail, but since I am going directly to Portland before arriving at Toppenish, I will mail this letter from Denver so as to reach you by Wednesday or Thursday.

Briefly, I will say that the situation looks favorable for proceeding with the original plans for moving the agency to Toppenish. Had Secretary Fall and Commissioner Burke been in Washington when the Indian's protest arrived, they would probably have been nothing come of it, but Secretary Fall's office replied to the protest stating that the matter would be held in suspense until an investigation of the charges was made, hence, when Secretary Fall returned, altho he took the matter up at once with Commissioner Burke who had also returned and was assured by Burke that there was no need of paying attention to the complaint, he, Fall, nevertheless felt that to avoid any possible future complications he had better order an investigation before proceeding further.

When I reached Washington Monday morning last, I found no mail but feeling quite sure that I could get a frank, fair expression from Burke I went at once to his office and was cordially received and saluted with "you Toppenish fellows are the worst pests I know of." All this with a smile and cordial handshake. I assured Brother Burke that I had not come all the way to Washington on this matter but that my visit there was merely incidental as I had already routed my ticket via New York and Washington on other business, but that however, he could depend upon us being on the job every minute when any one assailed our good name. He immediately assured me that the attitude of the Indians was not worrying him and that had he been at home when Secretary Fall's office received the complaint he felt sure there would nothing have come of it. He also said at once

that he felt we need not worry in the least as to the outcome and that he wished I would see Fall during the day and then report back to him. I arranged at once to do this, Fall being already at his desk on the 6th floor of the Department of the Interior Building, but first took Burke's suggestion to see Jones and arrange thru him for a date with the Secretary. I then went to the Senate office building adjoining the Capitol, finding Jones and Smoot already over at the Capitol where the Senate now convenes at eleven a.m. The Capitol being some sizeable structure I did not attempt to search them out but waited until the Senate convened, sending in my card to Senator Jones who promptly responded and immediately arranged a date with Secretary Fall for 3 p.m. Jones was cordial and helpful, but I, of course, did not ask him to take any position in the matter at all. After spending a half hour with him I visited with McNary for a few minutes getting some good information from both McNary and Jones on the present status of the McNary Bill. Meanwhile, observing the goings and comings of such celebrities as La Follette, Lodge, Willis and others. Smoot appeared in the Senate anti-chamber to meet a constituent and when he had finished Senator McNary introduced me to him and I found him cordial and informed upon our subject. I told him what I had already learned and that I was going to see Fall in the afternoon and would advise him of the situation so that in case we needed further help from him, he would know the situation. He had already had the matter up with Burke and knew his view.

I was at Secretary Fall's office promptly at three and altho his very capable assistant tried to explain to me that the whole matter was proceeding regularly and that it would probably unnecessary to see Secretary Fall, I told him that I was there for that purpose a date already having been arranged and that I would take but little of the Secretary's time. He therefore, rather reluctantly went in to advise Secretary Fall of my presence, I at his heels. Secretary Fall immediately invited me to have a chair which I at first declined, stating that my errand was short. He insisted that I be seated and it was four o'clock when I got away after a very pleasant and profitable interview not only on the subject in hand but a number of other phases of Indian Reservation matters, including roads, leases, etc. The gist of the conversation on the Agency matter was as stated in the second paragraph. I found Fall had the entire history of the Agency removal at his tongue's end and think I saw a slight note of questioning in his mind as to just why there had been a

sudden reversal of Commissioner Burke's original intention of moving the Agency to Wapato. However, there seemed nothing but the best relations between Fall and Burke, so I would not want to imply anything to the contrary. The Secretary stated that inasmuch as the before mentioned letter had left his office advising that the protest would be investigated, he felt it necessary to proceed as indicated and that he had therefore, asked the Board of Indian Commissioners to investigate. He also, I believe stated that Brosius representing the Indian Rights association would also investigate. While the Secretary made no promises, I took his general attitude to mean that we need have no fears but that ~~he~~ ^{we} would get an absolutely square deal, which in my judgment means that the order to move to Toppenish will be carried out.

He did call attention to his belief that the Indians' chief fear is that untimately some of their money will be spent for office buildings and other quarters. I told him that so far as Toppenish is concerned we had no idea that the Government intended to spend a cent in Toppenish now or for many years to come on any headquarters, and that we felt and understood that the Summer's bill had been killed or withdrawn which Burke later confirmed. I found Fall frank, well-informed and candid at every point and in my judgment he is a most capable and efficient Secretary.

I then went down to report to Burke as agreed and found him quite surprised that I should have spent a solid hour with Secretary Fall. He seemed interested in the details of the conversation and as soon as I left went up to see Fall on other matters, altho I have no doubt but the Agency matter came up before the end of the conversation. He again assured me that he felt we had not the remotest cause for worry and with reference to Brosius said that he would personally see Brosius in this connection as he is in his, Burke's, office nearly every day, in fact, had left the office but a few minutes before my return.

The offices in the building were practically abandoned when I finished with Burke and Tuesday being the 4th of July I went up to Philadelphia to spend the day with my sister, returning Wednesday morning early and spending the forenoon out at Bell, Maryland, 16 miles on nursery business in connection with the Government's experimental work there.

I then called on all the parties mentioned in your wire and left them fully informed of what had transpired. Meanwhile I had received your excellent petition on Monday evening and with this in hand addressed Secretary Fall, Commissioner Burke, Senator Smoot and Mr. (?) , Secretary of the

Catholic Welfare League, placing in the hands of each a copy of the petition and with the three latter, a copy of my brief argument to Secretary Fall. I then hurried over to see Mr. Garber of the Indian Educational Board and found him cordial and I believe glad to use his influence on our behalf. I also found Mrs. McCoy, whom Mrs. Meyer will remember very well indeed, and who as did also Mr. Garber express the most kindly interest in Mrs. Meyer and her welfare, sending their cordial greetings thereto.

I hurried to Burke's office hoping I might have another word with him before train time, but found him engaged with ex-Senator Hoke Smith and the time passing all too rapidly, I had to catch my westbound train without seeing him.

As the matter stands, I feel confident that everything will come out alright, but as stated in my wire, it is up to Toppenish to forthwith and immediately clean up. Burke emphasized this several times and while neither he nor Secretary Fall expects the impossible, they certainly did not mince words in telling me where they expected Toppenish to "head in". I can not, therefore, too strongly emphasize this point and I hope when I see you next Saturday or Sunday you will be prepared to tell me that every man on that petition is ready to not only back up the City Officers in the clean-up campaign, but that they each one will see to it that the "roughnecks" and bootleggers are ordered to "git" in no uncertain terms. You may expect the Inspector at any time. He may already have been there. He may not reveal himself, but keep your eyes open and be ready to give him a frank, cordial invitation to inspect, not only Toppenish, but every other available spot on the Reservation and to tell you just what is on his mind.

I think the above narrative is sufficient until I see you in person. My train leaves today, Monday, at 1:30 for Portland and I will probably be home Saturday night.

Sincerely,

J. A. Higgins