

June 5, 1956

The Hon Hal Holmes,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Hal:

Now that the Indian situation seems to have cooled, and worked out as you will find the vast majority of whites and Indians themselves wished it to be, other situations present themselves.

I would appreciate it if no "stir" be made in this regard, but I am more than curious concerning the Moran and Tollefson bill dealing with purchase of the Alcorn paintings for Chief Joseph Dam vista house.

I note that today, and ~~was~~ previously, press dispatches stated that this had the "support" of the "Washington State Historical Society."

The acquisition of the paintings has our individual support. I am wholeheartedly in favor of ~~them~~ that. I even would contribute my small share to any fund.

Several months ago this matter was brought up at the historical society meeting which I attended as a board ~~member~~ member or curator. I had to drive over a slick pass then, and arrived a bit late. They were just getting ready to take a vote. They voted and then although I was cold as to what was going on, I asked to express a personal opinion and was accorded that privilege. The vote was "unanimous" for going on record to ask the Corps of Army Engineers to purchase the paintings.

I raised the point that with Indians, to my knowledge, not knowing where their next meal was coming from up and down the very Columbia etc. I did not think the Army Corps of Engineers wished to spend taxpayers money for this, when there was such a need for money for finishing up dams, starting work on others etc. Just along that line.

One after another concurred including Col. Hanson (former Army Engineer) Reno Odlin, Tacoma banker and president; Weyerhaeuser, etc. So Odlin said that if it was okay, they'd just not record the vote and let it rest at that. Then I spoke for acquiring the paintings in any possible manner etc.

A couple of months later out comes a wirephoto with Tollefson, one of the Tacoma board members and Col. Iahner and statement of support by Historical Society. Then comes today's wire story. I telephoned Chapin Foster, our director, and he assured me that the minutes show no action for support as abody etc. and that something

wrong.

Now I don't wish to jeopardize the acquisition in anyway possible, cause no ~~unnecessary~~ uneasiness, suspicion etc. nor let anyone there know that I'm trying to determine if there is something on record there, from the Society, that it, as a society, is favorable and asks the Army Engineers to purchase the paintings. (They are good paintings too, and very properly should be preserved and perhaps housed at Chief Joseph Dam)

I wish to be "armed" for my next trip to Tacoma to the state board meeting, not with letters or documents but just the knowledge of what the true situation is. Perhaps I am in error. I don't think I am overly suspicious. The board gets along fine and is doing constructive things, but I wish to know what kind of ground I'm on. And I will keep my source protected. It may be in fact I will never open my mouth. But I'd like to be ready. If the statements are made on straight or directly sent stories from Washington, they must be on the bills or something.

One reason why I think it wise to "wait and see" is I suspect others will feel as I did, or if they don't, then there are such dams coming up as The Dalles where they most assuredly should have a Vista House, developed to show the past life of the area etc. And I certainly ~~am~~ am in favor of things like that, but a little dubious about where the money should originate from.

The PUD is being very helpful to the Wanapums. I see they have been granted a delay past the July 1 deadline for construction start. They are going to provide the Wanapums with a home etc. It is far better that way I believe than resorting to legislative action. I think putting the matter into a memorandum is now under way. The Indians are most cooperative and appreciative. I'm not arguing with the Department of the Interior that it approve the memorandum, because surely the government must feel protected against the future and there must be a finality about the matter. But if other things enter into it, such as trying to force the Wanapums into some tribe etc. I will contact you, it being their wishes. As things now are, the PUD is moving the rocks or will move them rather off the island, repair the oldhouse, move it, build a newhouse etc. and protect the graveyard and some other things. This has all been voluntary on their part and has been worked out with Glenn Smothers (now still ill at home) and Nat Washington and myself. The poor Wanapums have had to resort to no legal employment and what they are getting worked out for them. I do not believe could have been so easily accomplished had it not been generally known that you had your eye on their welfare etc.

My book, Drummers and Dreamers goes on sale Oct. 6. Finished up a five week job of indexing it two weeks ago. It is running larger than I figured, close to 390 pps. with 50 pps of pictures. The publisher is doing a top job. I suppose it will be out about a month earlier. I feel that Emmons even might like it since there are two sides to every question and I try to show, in the small part dealing with the Bureau, how the Bureau is working to put the Indians on their feet, regardless of accusations in some pressure group quarters. Enclosed is invitation to be used during book tour which Indians and I will make in Oregon and Wash.

Kind regards

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