

January 22, 1956

Mrs. Mary Jim,
Wapato, Wash.

Dear Mary:

I have received a letter from Mr. Charles F. Luce, Walla Walla.

I wrote to him as you requested, and asked that he write to you direct instead of writing to me. I don't know why he wrote back to me instead.

He said he knows Harry and is his friend. He said that he recalls talking to him years ago about an allotment or homestead that his father owned along the Snake River. He said he recalled investigating the matter and concluded that he could not assist Harry in the land problem. He said he did not recall the details but had a vague recollection that the property was taken for taxes and later sold at a tax sale.

Perhaps that is the way someone else came into possession of it.

I know a little about the homestead law. The homesteads that were granted to Indians were protected for 25 years only. After 25 years then if taxes were not paid on them, they were the same as the white man's lands. If I have property and do not pay taxes on it, the land can be put up for auction to pay for the taxes. I don't know what is what happened, but it maybe.

Mr. Luce said that in any event the U.S. Corps of Engineers, before it acquires the lands that will be flooded back of Ice Harbor Dam, will employ a title company in Walla Walla County and another title company in Franklin County to prepare a complete title report on all of the lands to be submerged or otherwise taken in connection with the project.

He suggests that you write to the District Engineer, Walla Walla District, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla, and state your claim.

If the title companies search turn up any interest of Fish Hook Jim or descendants, I am sure they will deal fairly with any of the descendants.

Now Mary, you want to understand that the days are past when

people take advantage of others, just because they do not understand or because they are Indians. I know, the case against us looks bad, but you can expect the utmost fairness and have the greatest confidence in the Corps of Army Engineers. In one sense, they are the government, and you and I go to make up the government. They are ~~trained~~ trained in their work and they are keeping alert eyes open to protect people just like you in times like these.

It may be possible that you will wish to acquaint them with any burial problems you have in connection with the islands there at Ice Harbor Dam site. I remember in years past you told me of the burials there of your people, those you know by their names and of some of your relatives.

You have my permission to send this letter to the Corps of Army Engineers, Walla Walla, and it will speak for itself. Of course you must realize that you are an enrolled Yakima, and that the Corps of Army Engineers will consult the proper tribal authorities regarding these burials.

You have not shown an inclination to go outside of your tribe to do this, and it will come to light--about these burials--in due time, but it might be wise to alert them now that you know of them. Then when the time is proper, they will consult your tribe and your tribe will put you in touch with the right persons to see that the graves you may have an interest in are removed to security, or remain, as you wish.

It is not right to always look at the money in things. You surely don't place money above wanting to protect the graves of your relatives. I will help you when I can, and you know too that Mr. Luce will, but in past years too many attorneys have been leading Indians to believe they can get lots and lots of money for them. All that many of the attorneys do is get money through continuing jobs for themselves. The Army Engineers handle these things because it is their job, when they set out to build a dam. You can trust them. You can trust them the same as you and others have trusted me to see that some people, who think wrong, do not take things from the Indians that do not belong to them.