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Letter from Representative Burdick to Brendetta Black Dog Regarding Per Capita Payments, April 27, 1954

Usher L. Burdick
United States House of Representatives

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April 27, 1954

Mrs. Brindetta Black Dog
Post Office Box 274
Elbowoods, North Dakota

Dear Mrs. Black Dog:

Thank you very much for the clippings you sent me in regard to Indian Affairs. I am glad to have them.

As to the per capita payments for the Fort Berthold and Fort Peck Reservations, I am informed by the Bureau that Secretary Lewis approves a bill which was introduced which provides for taking care of the remaining money in the fund in lieu of a distribution on a per capita basis. He apparently feels that there should be a reserve fund, especially in view of the fact that there may be a partial termination bill passed. I was also told that there would be a distribution made to those going off the reservation (for rehabilitation) and also to those who are on the reservation who are regarded as competent. The Bureau plans to send some one out there to discuss this bill with the tribe, and to try to work some program or plan for handling the money remaining in the fund. The Bureau apparently also feels that the money distributed in the \$1000 first per capita payment and in the \$300 payment in April, 1953, was not used to the best advantage, and that there should be a reserve fund for emergencies.

I hope this gives you the information you wish, and if there is anything more I can do for you here, please let me know.

Also I hope that you find a suitable house in Williston so that you can make your home there, and I want to thank you very much for your invitation to visit you. I shall try to do so when I return to North Dakota.

Very truly yours,

Usher L. Burdick, M.C.

HOMER JENKINS*** INDIAN BUREAU

At Fort Peck they have had a membership question which will have to be resolved by the tribe, so they know who are members and who are not. Until this is done there is no effective way to arrange a per capita distribution. There is a bill now pending calling for restoration of mineral rights to those allottees who did not retain them and there would be a distribution to those particular allottees of the tribe who retained the mineral rights.

A per capita payment of \$1000 was made to Ft. Berthold Indians on and another of \$300 in April, 1953

\$2½ million still in fund. Three categories -- ~~xx~~ industrial development. By reason of former contingencies and emergencies the Dept. takes position that if Indians in Fort Berthold are in need of rehabilitation then that money should be used for some type or program or plan and not for a division or per capita payment, and Sec. Lewis approves bill to take care of the remaining money in lieu of per capita distribution. There would be a distribution for those going off the reservation and to those who are on the reservation who are regarded as competentand those who are incompetent or did not file for competency decree. They will send some out there to discuss this bill with the tribe.