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Letter from Representative Burdick to James Black Dog Regarding Tribal Funds, May 3, 1957

Usher L. Burdick
United States House of Representatives

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May 3, 1957

Mr. James Black Dog
Box 118
Emmet, North Dakota

Dear Mr. Black Dog:

The Fort Berthold Indians are under the Indian Reorganization Act, Sec. 16, of which permits the tribe to ratify a constitution (which has been done). The constitution permits the tribal Council to appropriate funds of the tribe.

The segregated funds have nothing to do with leases on tribal land. These funds come from the payments made by the government for the flooding of the Indian land by the Garrison Dam reservoir. Congress authorized segregation of these funds on the basis of the membership roll approved by the tribe, ratified by the members, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Some appeals as to the membership roll are now pending and as soon as these are settled the funds will be divided according to the number of people entitled to receive them. At that time the per capita payments will be made.

There are literally hundreds of Indian bills pending and it would be impossible to send you all of them. If you will let me know what particular ones you want I will try to get them for you.

Sincerely yours,

Usher L. Burdick, M. C.