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Letter from Glenn Emmons to Senator Langer Regarding Payment for Lands Inundated by the Garrison Dam Project, December 28, 1953

Glenn L. Emmons

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Lamin Dam

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Hon. William Langer
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dec. 28, 1953

Sic - Floyd Montclair

My dear Senator Langer:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of December 9 enclosing a copy of a petition requesting the full per capita payment to the members of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation of the balance remaining from those funds authorized by the act of October 29, 1949 (63 Stat. 1026).

As you know, a per capita payment of \$1,000 was made to each member of the Three Affiliated Tribes in accordance with a resolution which was adopted by the Tribal Business Council on April 13, 1951, and approved by the Department on May 4, 1951. After the per capita payment was made and before other provisions of the resolution were carried out by the Tribal Business Council, the tribe in a referendum in 1952 disapproved the resolution of April 13, 1951. An additional per capita payment of \$200 was authorized on April 15, 1953, by the Department from the funds authorized by the act of October 29, 1949. Numerous discussions have been held with the Tribal Business Council both here and on the reservation in an effort to have them develop an acceptable program for the use of remaining funds. The position of the Bureau has been that a long-range program for the use of the remaining funds would be more desirable and beneficial than a per capita payment. This position was taken because the tribe desired continuing responsibility on the part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to furnish services to the Indians notwithstanding the approximately \$5,000,000 available to them.

The matter of a full per capita payment of the balance remaining from those funds authorized by the act of October 29, 1949, was reviewed recently by the Department. In a letter dated August 26, 1953, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior stated that the Department did not favor a full per capita payment of all tribal funds remaining in the Treasury because of the need for authorizing these funds as a part of a program looking toward the termination of Federal responsibility for administering the affairs of the Three Affiliated Tribes. This position has been strengthened by the approval of House Concurrent Resolution 108. This resolution stated that it is the policy of Congress, as rapidly as possible, to make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are practicable to other citizens of the United States to end their status as wards of the United States and to grant them all the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizens.

The copy of the petition is returned as requested.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ Glenn Emmons
Commissioner

Enclosure