

LaFollette Jr. MSS.

Box 410 Series C File
Indian Affairs
General
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GREEN BAY, WIS.

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Hon. Robert M. LaFollette
United States Senator
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

At the request of several Indians of the Oneida tribe living on what formerly was the Oneida Reservation, joining the City of Green Bay, I am asking whether you can procure for me for the benefit of these Oneida Indians a report from the Secretary of the Interior as to just what official action and acts have been taken and done by the government with reference to an allotment of land made to one Edward Neddy Hill, a member of the Oneida tribe.

In general you perhaps know that in 1887 the Congress of the United States passed an act purporting to allot the land constituting the Oneida Reservation and at that time being the property of the tribe as a whole to the individual members of the tribe then living. Under this act the Reservation was surveyed and the United States Government issued trust patents to the individual Oneidas assigning to each individual a certain tract of land. The act pursuant to which this was done provided that all of the individual allotments should be held in trust by the United States Government for the allottee for a period of twenty-five years and the act further provided that this term of twenty-five years might under certain conditions upon order of the President of the United States be extended for some additional period of time. Again, pursuant to the original act of allotment of 1887, the President of the United States did extend the twenty-five year trust period of the Edward Neddy Hill allotment so as to now expire in the year 1927. Some years ago the Department of the Interior took some action intending to sell the allotment set aside for Edward Neddy Hill and has issued a patent in fee simple of this allotment pursuant to a sale of the land, which sale was made under regulation set up by the Department of the Interior.

The specific information that my clients desire is, first, just what acts have been done by the Department of the Interior with reference to the Edward Neddy Hill allotment and, second, what is the opinion holding or ruling of the Department of the Interior as to its own power to sell and issue a patent in fee simple of the Edward Neddy Hill allotment before the trust period as extended has expired. My clients, being persons situated similarly to Edward Neddy Hill, contend that prior to the expiration of this trust period as extended the United States Government has no power to sell or convey by patent in fee simple any such allotments.

Hon. Robert M. LaFollette

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There are a number of allotments in the Reservation here in a similar situation and the questions above put affect the rights of a number of Indians. It therefore is not a question that pertains to the rights of one Indian, but that pertains to the rights of a number of them. Can you procure from the Department of the Interior the above information and pass it on to me in a concrete report.

These Indians so situated from time to time are holding meetings over these questions and would very much appreciate your efforts to procure for them the desired information as soon as you can conveniently furnish it.

Respectfully yours,

Wm. H. Stebbins

MHS:LB