

Albany January 10th. 1778

The Commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department met pursuant to adjournment.

Present as before.

The Consideration of the papers from Congress being reassumed, the Commissioners thereupon came to the following Resolutions.

- 1st. That the Six Nations be invited to a Treaty with the Commissrs. at John's Town in Tryon County 15th day of February next.
- 2d. That in the mean while a Letter be Sent to Congress shewing the reasons of the inexpediency of putting their Instructions into Execution, and requiring their farther opinion thereupon.

The Commissrs. agreed to advance to Coll. [Timothy] Bedel the Sum of 200 Dollars by Major Whitcomb accompyd. with the following Letter.

Albany Jany 10th. 1778.

Sir

We send you by Major Whitcomb Two hundred Dollars. We could not send the above Sum in hard money as it cannot possibly be procured.

You will also be pleased to give us an Account of the Expenditure of the money heretofore advanced to you. We are &c.

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Minutes of the proceedings of the Commissrs.
January 9th. 1778.

(PCCe) M247, Roll 183:377-80

COMMISSIONERS OF INDIAN AFFAIRS TO LAURENS

Albany January 12th. 1778

Sir

The papers with which Mr. Duane was charged by Congress to be laid before the Commissioners of Indian Affairs they had the honor to receive on the 8th. instant by the hands of that Gentleman. They have been considered with all the attention due to their importance, and the Indians are invited to meet the Commissioners at John's Town on the 15th. of next month, being as early as they can possibly convene.

The Commissioners beg leave to observe to Congress, that it appears to them that the good fortune which attended the american arms in this quarter has not had all that effect on the Indians in general and the Senecas and Cayugas in particular which we expected, and so much wished for, the latter have hitherto continued to threaten revenge for the loss and disgrace they sustained in the engagement with the late Genl. Herkemeyer. And, as the Commissioners at the Treaty in August 1776 declared that the united States would not suffer themselves to be insulted with impunity by any people on the face of the Earth, and assured the Indians, that if they again committed hostilities, neither fair speeches, or promises would be accepted in satisfaction, but that we would do ourselves justice; as they the Senecas, Cayugas and Mohawks have since been in arms against us, and continue to evince an unfriendly disposition, the Commissioners apprehend, that any engagement they may make at the ensuing Treaty for their future peaceable demeanor will be as much slighted by them as those formerly made, nor do we believe that it will be possible to induce them to undertake the Enterprize against Niagara unless a more vigorous and decisive mode of proceeding is adopted than that pointed out by Congress, we are humbly of opinion that we should not only in the most peremptory Terms command them to bury the hatchet they have taken against us to evince their contrition for past misconduct and the sincerity of their future views by

joining our Arms and immediately committing hostilities on the Enemy and if they will not give us this reasonable satisfaction to inform them that we shall take an early opportunity so effectually to chastise them as to put it out of their power will hereafter to disturb their repose. If Congress should think it advisable to permit us to address them in this strain, it is probable that it will be attended with salutary offers, and afford us hopes that they will make the attempt on Niagara; It would however be equally vain and hazardous thus to address them unless Congress determined on spirited and coercive measures will previously direct the Commanding Officer of this Department to be prepared with a competent force to march into the indian Country and carry their measures into Effect. We hope with the earliest opportunity to be honored with their Commands on this important subject.

The Oneidas, Tuscaroras and a considerable part of the Onondages are so firmly attached to us that we beleive they may easily be persuaded to attempt the destruction of the Enemy's Vessels on Ontario, if they are laid up at Oswegatchie, and not otherwise for they dare not attempt to go to Niagara unless the Senecas and Cayugas should concur with the intended requisition, or they be supported by an army the destruction of these vessels must produce the most extensive consequences and be a singular advantage should Congress undertake the reduction of Niagara, if the proposed attempt by the Senecas is not carried into execution.

The Enemy have a very capital advantage over us in their intercourse with the Indians as they have it in their power to afford them such ample supplies, and those in their interest are continually drawing Comparisons, we know how impossible it is to procure all that is wanted, but Blankets are so indispensibly necessary that we beg five or six hundred may be sent us from the Southward or Eastward if they can be procured.

Specie for presents to the principal Sachems and warriors is also indispensibly necessary to carry into execution the wish of Congress not more than two hundred and forty dollars are in the military chest here, these we have requested the D. Paymaster to retain in his hands for us which he has promised but wishes a particular order of Congress to justify his paying them to us. Mr. Wheelock has applyed to us for aid in supporting some indian Boys of the Cagnuaga Tribe now at his School, we do not conceive

ourselves authorized to appropriate any of the public money in our hands to that use, but we are humbly of opinion that so much we would suffice to cloath them would be bestowed to the advantage of the States. Copy of his letter we have the honor to inclose together with a Copy of a Letter from both Coll. Bedel containing some important Information.

The Eagles Tail and Rattle Trap are not come to hand tho' we have advice that they are arrived at Hurley.

The weakness of the Board of Commissioners and the distance at which two of the members reside from home, has frequently obliged Genl. Schuyler and Mr. Douw sololy to transact the Business. Genl. Woolcot has little hopes that he will be able to attend the next conference and Genl. Schuyler thinks it [] that he shall before that be favoured with the orders of Congress to attend at Head Quarters for the inquiry into his Conduct, on these accounts it is necessary that the board should be strengthened especially as the business of the approaching Treaty is highly interesting.

Mr. Duane has assisted us in our deliberations on this important Business, and we are happy to find that he coincides with us in the sentiments contained in this Letter.

In the name of the Commissioners I have the Honor to be Sir

Your most obedt. humble Servt.

Robert Yates Secry.
to the Commissrs. of Indian
Affairs in the Northern Departmt.

To the Honble Henry Lawrens Esqr.
President of the Honble. Congress