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Please Help Our Own American Indians: Give Them a Chance, They Will Make Good, February 1953

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February - 1953

*Review
Muel.*

PLEASE HELP OUR OWN AMERICAN INDIANS - GIVE THEM
A CHANCE - THEY WILL MAKE GOOD

"Wheat prices tumbling as surplus piles up." These are the press headlines today. This writer has seen similar headlines many, many times over the past sixty years and, having had years of farm experience, we fully realize the importance to the farmer of surpluses, and that is what prompts us to write this letter in behalf of our own American Indians, especially the Indian children on the reservations. Yes, over sixty years ago this writer saw the finest wheat raised in the Red River Valley Wheat Belt, sold for 25 to 35¢ per bushel, and our Indians, having been driven back on non-productive lands, were starving for bread. I have seen corn sold for 10¢ per bushel. Yes, I have seen corn burned for fuel in South Dakota and Iowa. And at the same time our Indians on the reservations were starving for want of bread. The year following the first World War the finest wheat in the world, raised in Montana, was hauled from fifty to one hundred fifty miles by horse and wagon over cow trail roads to market and the farmer only received 25¢ per bushel, and still our own American Indians were starving for bread.

Now, to bring this subject closer to date, only five years ago our Federal Government ordered millions of bushels of fine potatoes destroyed in Minnesota and, at the same time, and not over one hundred and fifty miles away, were little helpless, suffering, and dying Indian children from diseases caused by malnutrition, lack of warm clothing, and inadequate housing, and they never received one bushel of potatoes.

Now Ladies and Gentlemen of the United States Congress, we suggest that you present and support an emergency relief bill to turn over and distribute one million bushels of wheat to our own American Indians. The larger productive reservations could use it for seed planting and food, the smaller reservations for food and bread.

We hope and trust this suggestion will meet with your approval and we thank you most sincerely for all the little Indian Children of America.

Sincerely,

Geo. S. Stephenson
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P.S. The foregoing facts can be substantiated by the records.