

Office Indian Agency
Mackinac Nov-12th 1844

Sir

I have the honor here with to forward you all of
A. H. Newbouts Vouchers, (three from St. Francis being, but the
day is) also Wm. M. Delator Voucher & Report for
last quarter -

respectfully
your Obedt. Servt.

Justin Rice, Jr.

Robt. Stuart Esq
Acty. Supl. Ind. Affs,
Detroit

Mackinac

S. Several Indians have lately made inquiries at the Office, whether all the lands about
St. Ignace and Cheboygan Lake, are in market. I think I have informed you, that
they have purchased about thirty thousand Acres, at Little Traverse, Middle Village and the
Coys, & from this I should infer that all the lands thereabout, are in market; still
it might be well for me, to have authentic information in the Office. Would it not be
well for you to obtain from the Land Office, a map, or other information on this point
and send me? Several Indians have money, and wish to go to the Land Office
early in the spring. I have been applied to lately by Indians from Little Traverse
and Cheboygan for advice on this question: viz, Whether an Indian who has \$100.
or more, had better purchase in his own name, or unite with others, & purchase ~~some~~

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and purchase in the name of their Chief; as has been done in the purchases made this fall? I have told them that I would take the subject into consideration, and also write you, and give an answer at some future time. What answer shall be given to this question?

I have taken occasion, when the subject of purchasing lands and holding property, has been bro't up at the Office by these Indians, to have a long talk with them, or to them, on the importance of a new mode of doing their business with the traders; viz, to give up the credit system, and pay down for all they buy; no a word to keep out of debt. I tell them, with their ammunitions, & their extensive privileges of Hunting in winter, fishing, sugar making, Crops &c. there is not the least necessity for contracting debts. — that as soon as they begin to own houses and lands, the traders will appear very friendly — will be very willing to trust them — will urge them to buy, and before they are aware of it, if they take goods on credit, their accounts will be larger than they expect, and larger than they can readily pay, when called upon, and instead of the traders waiting as they have hitherto done, for a treaty, or some part of what Gov^t owes them. They will sue them, and the Sheriff or Constable, will take their houses and lands, and hordes, and crops away from ^{them} for half what they may be worth, and leave them worse off than ever —; but if they will come to the full determination from the beginning, not to get into debt, they will be in no danger &c. &c. — And here, I would remark, that I find the tone of some of the traders is changed, since the late purchases of land by them. They say if they still refuse to sign the petition for the pay^t of their debts, they will look to the property they are purchasing for their pay —

I felt so the gratified a year ago, to see the Indians refuse to sign the petition for the pay^t of their back debts, as then proposed; but it now appears to me, that these Indians, will never have any peace, until

their lands
and all
settled,
Ottawa,
and off

then credits are settled. and if good men can be appointed to examine
and allow what is just on these claims, the sooner they are
settled, the better, it will be for these Indians, especially these
Ojibwas, who are in reality a community of sober, industrious men,
and appear to be very fast acquiring just notions of economy.

Yours truly

Justin Rice