

Kaukauna Outagamie, Wis.
Sept. 27, 1855

Sir:

Having resolved to resign my place as Government Interpreter to the Menominee Indians, I have concluded to state the reasons that lead me to do so. I attended the payment of the annuities to said Indian this fall, and was compelled to become the instrument of so much oppression and injustice that I am not willing to occupy so humiliating a position any longer. The conduct of Dr. Francis Huebschmann the Superintendent on that occasion in relation to the claim of Mr. R.W. Thompson against the Indians was such as to create in my mind a disgust for any official position that should require me to take part in it, in any way. I had always supposed before that, that it was the duty of government officers merely to see that justice was done to all persons, and did not think that they could be required to become prosecutors and persecutors of those who had business with the Indians or the government. I was with the Indians when they first employed Mr. Thompson in Washington, in A.D. 1850 and know that he was not willing to be employed by them, until they persuaded him to it. And I know, that ever since, they have looked to nobody but him to do their business and have refused to do business even with the government, without his advice. And while I have had nothing to do at all with Mr. Thompson getting his pay for his services, I think it is wrong that the government officers should interfere with the Indians so as to force them even against their will, to refuse to pay him. Having the management of the business of the Indians, they have great power over them and if they exercise this power for bad purposes it had the effect to corrupt and debase them. I am not willing to take any part in such things, and therefore resign my place.

On Friday when the council of the Indians was held by Mr. Claske, I told the Indians that Mr. Claske had directed that nobody should speak to them about Mr. Thompson's claim, till they had concluded and reported their conclusion. This was done at the request of the superintendent, yet this order was violated almost soon as made, by the Superintendent. He professed that he would be very indignant if he could hear or find out, that anybody spoke a word to them on behalf of Mr. Thompson and several persons to watch, if he could find any such, yet he himself was violating this order constantly. He had chiefs and young men in his private room as often as he could get them there; talking to them, telling them that they should not pay Mr. Thompson and threatening them with the loss of their annuities if they did so. He told the young men that they must not permit the chiefs to pay him, and induced them to threaten to take the lines of the chiefs if they did. He abused Mr. Thompson to them, said that he was not entitled to any thing and that he was trying to cheat them out of money that did not belong to the chiefs but the young men and the children. He did everything in his power, by secret and unfair means, to get them to reject Mr. Thompson's claim, and used his official position to enable him to practice this injustice. I felt degraded while I was compelled from my position, to take part in this business, and determined at once, that upon my return home, I would resign my office. I have known the Menominee Indians a great many years, and know that the business of the nation has always been done by the chiefs and head men of whom there are now only about twenty three or four. But the superintendent, Dr. Huebschmann persuaded them last May to agree that in all matters concerning their annuities, after that the young men should have an equal voice with the chiefs. I believe that this was done for no other than to induce the rejection of Mr. Thompson's claim, by getting the

young men to believe that he was to be paid out of their money and that the chiefs had no power to pay their money. It had this effect, because after he had made the young men believe this, they threatened to take the lives of the chiefs if they paid Mr. Thompson. The superintendant has not consulted the young men about other claims, but consulted the chiefs alone, and he and they have acted together. It is satisfactory to my mind therefore that this was designed for no other purpose than to be used as an instrument of oppression against Mr. Thompson. Such conduct can never receive any sanction from honorable minds. On the morning after the council held by Mr. Clark, I understood that the chiefs with not more than four exceptions, had decided to pay Mr. Thompson what Congress had allowed him, and I have no doubt would have reported this decision to Mr. Clarke but for the interference of the Superintendent. He got the most of the chiefs together with some of the young men around them, and required that I should interpret what he said, in direct violation of the order of the day before. And this he did without any notice to Mr. Clarke or Mr. Thompson. He told them that they must take his advice, as he was their friend, he was ready to advise them about Mr. Thompson's claim, that they ought not to pay him that if they did not he had his remedy against the government, that the president and commissioner of Indian affairs were good lawyers and if they did not pay him, he had his remedy to apply to them, that he was allowed too much, and it should be left to good lawyers to decide how much he should be paid, that if they paid him he would laugh at them and that he was a Doctor and received certain fees, and knew how much men should be paid. Just as he was saying these things Mr. Thompson came up, when he immediately changed the subject to something about a hay contract, and thus, furnished proof that he knew he was engaged in dishonorable act. His countenance and agitation at detection betrayed this to everybody who saw him. From this time he made no further attempt to talk to the Indians where he could be detected, but continued to do it in secret, both night and day up to the council on Monday the 10 instat when the claim was rejected. He even went so far as to procure a meeting of the Catholic chiefs at the house of the Priest, after service on Sunday so as to bring his influence to bear upon them against Mr. Thompson. And again Sunday night had the Priest and some of the Catholic chiefs at his room. This is such an outrage as few have the hardihood to undertake to practice to use the great influence of the Priest over the minds of Catholic Indians to influence them to do wrong instead of teaching them to do right. There is much more of the conduct of the Superintendent that is impossible to put down, but this is enough to show why it is that I cannot hold my place any longer for I cannot degrade myself by helping to do such things. Very respectfully your servant.

Chas. A. Grignon
U.S. Interpreter

Hon. Geo. W. Manypenny Commissioner of Indian
affairs, Washington City. D. Columbia.