

INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, FORT KEOGH, MONT.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A COPY OF A REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IN RELATION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AT FORT KEOGH, MONT.

JANUARY 13, 1899.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 12, 1899.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith a copy of a report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated the 10th instant, made in pursuance of the following provision contained in the Indian appropriation act approved July 1, 1898:

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs is hereby directed to examine into and report to Congress at its next session upon the practicability and desirability and cost of establishing an Indian industrial school on the Fort Keogh Military Reservation, in the State of Montana.

Very respectfully,

THOS. RYAN, *Acting Secretary.*

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, January 10, 1899.

SIR: In the act making appropriations for the current and continuing expenses of the Indian Department, etc., for the fiscal year 1899, it is provided that—

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs is hereby directed to examine into and report to Congress at its next session upon the practicability and desirability and cost of establishing an Indian industrial school on the Fort Keogh Military Reservation, in the State of Montana.

In compliance with the terms of this provision, I have the honor respectfully to report as follows:

The Fort Keogh Military Reservation is located in the southeastern part of Montana, embracing a territory about 9 miles square, being bounded on the north by the Yellowstone River and on the east by Tongue River. The fort is situated on level and well-selected land in the northeastern corner of the military reservation, about 1 mile south of the Yellowstone and about 2 miles west of the Tongue River. As to climate and location, Fort Keogh has a dry and very healthful climate and the drainage of the land is a gradual slope to the Yellowstone on the north. There are about forty small buildings that would be of no value to an Indian school. They are, most of them, small and unserviceable buildings, unsightly, and of no value whatever to an Indian school, and would need to be removed were a school established. There has been no sewer system put in at Fort Keogh. However, about a year ago Lieutenant Wilkins, then quartermaster at Fort Keogh, made an estimate of the cost of a complete system of sewerage, which was about \$5,000. There is said to be a pump house, containing two steam pumps and the necessary boilers. There are also a tank house and an elevated tank, with necessary water mains, hydrants, and connections. They have recently been put in, are in good condition, and would furnish a supply of good water for all the buildings of the fort; but the wells from which the water supply is pumped will need to be repaired, as they have been simply boarded up.

In order to teach any farming or gardening a system of irrigation must be constructed. There are two sources of water supply for such a system, namely, the Yellowstone River on the north and Tongue River on the east. It is estimated that the irrigation ditch from the Yellowstone River would cost \$44,848. The other plan would be an irrigation ditch from Tongue River, which would cost about \$5,000, in addition to which would be the water right and annual water rent to the Miles City Canal and Irrigating Company. The regular charges of this company are from 50 cents to \$2 per acre, according to the land and kind of crops raised.

In order to establish an Indian school at this place it would be necessary to practically discard the present buildings and a large proportion of the water mains running to these separate buildings. Of course, a few of them might be utilized for stables, outhouses, and possibly employees' quarters. I would estimate that, in order to put up a first-class nonreservation school with a capacity of 150 pupils, which should always be the minimum capacity for such institutions, it would necessitate at least two dormitories which, of brick, with modern improvements, would cost not less than \$15,000 apiece; a school building, to cost \$10,000, would also be necessary; a mess hall, dining hall, kitchen, laundry, etc., which would require about \$15,000 more; fencing, improvements, etc., about \$5,000; making a total of \$60,000, to which should be added the cost of the irrigating ditch, either \$44,000 if the Yellowstone River source is selected or \$5,000 and also the annual expense of water right and rental.

As to the desirability of such an institution, I am satisfied that at present there is a sufficiency of nonreservation schools. The effort of the Indian Office has been to render more effective and more efficient those already in existence rather than the establishment of new ones. However, should Congress see fit and proper to make the expenditure necessary for the construction and maintenance of such a school, this

office would endeavor to fill it to its capacity, although there is a strong prejudice among the Indians on the reservations against sending their children off of the reservations to school. With proper compulsory school laws there would be no trouble in filling such a school if it were established.

Very respectfully,

W. A. JONES,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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