

SETTLERS IN WIND RIVER VALLEY, WYOMING.

MAY 21, 1878.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. PAGE, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1199.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1199) for the relief of certain settlers in the Wind River Valley, Wyoming Territory, having had the same under consideration, report as follows:

It appears that on the 3d day of July, A. D. 1868, a treaty was negotiated with the Shoshone (Eastern Band) and Bannock tribes of Indians, by which a reservation was set apart for said Indians in the Wind River Valley, Wyoming Territory; that prior to the establishment of said reservation a number of parties had settled upon and occupied a portion of the lands afterward embraced within the boundaries of said reservation, and had made improvements thereon, the said lands so settled upon and improved being, at the time of such settlement and improvement, a portion of the unsurveyed public lands of the United States, and subject to occupancy under the pre-emption laws.

By the setting apart of said lands so settled upon as a part of the reservation for said tribes of Indians, the settlers so locating have been deprived of the opportunity of obtaining title to the lands occupied by them, through no fault of their own, and are anxious to obtain payment for the value of their improvements, and leave the reservation to the sole occupancy of the Indians themselves, settling upon some portion of the public domain to which they can obtain title.

It is desirable, both on account of these settlers and the Indians, that the reservation should be vacated for the sole occupancy of the Indians; but it seems manifestly unjust to deprive these settlers of their homes and the results of their hard labors in improving their locations without making them a fair compensation for the value of the improvements made by them.

The settlers who thus established homes and made improvements within the limits of said reservation, before the same was established, having petitioned the department for relief, the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs directed the agent in charge of said Indians to make a report of the nature and value of the improvements made by said settlers, a copy of which report made pursuant to such direction, under date of February 12, 1876, is herewith submitted:

Estimate of improvements made by white men on the Shoshone and Bannock reservation prior to treaty of 1868, by James Irwin, United States Indian agent, February 12, 1876.

Names.	Date of claims.	Dwelling-houses.		Stables.		Vegetable or root cellars.		Corrals.		Wells.		Land broke.		Post and rail fences.		Dams and ditches.		Total.
William Boyd	Spring 1868	1 stone, 14 x 16..	\$300	Log, 14 x 16	\$50	1 cellar	\$50	1 corral	\$25	1 well.	\$25	60 acres.	\$300	350 rods.	\$442 50	100 rods.	\$50	\$1,392 50
William Evans	May 8, 1868	1 log, 14 x 16 ...	150	Pole	25	1 cellar	50	1 corral.	50	1 well.	25	60 acres	300	350 rods	525 00	100 rods.	50	1,275 00
Do.....		1 adobe, 14 x 16.	200	Greenhouse	50													
James Rogers..	Fall 1867....	1 adobe, 20 x 27	600	2 log	75	2 cellars	100	1 corral.	50			88 acres.	440	640 rods.	864 00	125 rods.	125	2,554 00
William Jones.	Fall 1867....	1 log, 26 x 14....	100	1 log and gran'ry	50	1 cellar	50	1 corral.	25	1 well	25	20 acres.	100	200 rods.	100 00	50 rods	50	500 00
Thos. Cosgrove.	Spring 1868	1 sod, 18 x 20 ...	100	1 log	50	1 cellar	50			1 well.	25	35 acres.	175	320 rods.	432 00	200 rods.	200	1,032 00
D. Williams ...	June, 1868...	1 stone, 12 x 16..	100			1 cellar	50			1 well.	25	25 acres.	125	240 rods.	324 00	40 rods.	30	654 00
N. P. Davidson	May 8, 1868	1 log, 16 x 20....	200	1 log	150	1 cellar	50			1 well.	25	30 acres.	150	320 rods.	432 00	50 rods.	100	1,107 00
T. Kutch.....	May 8, 1868	1 log, 15 x 30....	250	1 log	75	1 cellar	50			1 well.	25	35 acres.	175	320 rods.	432 00	50 rods.	100	1,107 00
Jno. L. Parker .	May 16, 1868	1 log, 14 x 16....	150			1 cellar	50	1 corral	20	1 well.	20	1 acre..	5					250 00
Total.....		11.....	2,450	0.....	525	10.....	500	5.....	170	8.....	200	354...	1,770	2,740.....	3,551 50	665.....	705	9,871 50

In accordance with instructions of the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated March 31, 1875, also January 26, 1876, I have the honor to transmit the above tabular statement of the value of improvements made on this reservation by William Boyd and others, which improvements commenced previous to the treaty of the 3d of July, 1868, by actual settlement. The value of T. Kutch and N. P. Davidson's improvements is considered at the time they were requested to leave the reservation.

JAMES IRWIN, U. S. Indian Agent.

We find that the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, after carefully investigating the claims of said settlers, recommended that the same should be paid, in a communication dated May 2, 1876, in the following terms:

"I am of opinion that the claims are just, and, after a personal interview with Agent Irwin, am satisfied that the valuation is fair and reasonable, and the claimants should be paid the amounts stated by him."

It also appears from the report made to the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs by the agent in charge of said tribes of Indians, for the year 1877, that said agent strongly recommends the payment of said claims, in order that certain causes of irritation between said Indians and the settlers may be removed.

As these claims are so manifestly just, and as their prompt payment by the government would remove all cause of hostility and grievance between the Indians and settlers, and would leave the reservation to be occupied solely for the purpose for which it was set apart, and thus tend to prevent Indian wars and difficulties in that section of country, your committee report the bill back, and recommend that the same be amended by striking from the first section thereof, in lines four and five, the words "through appraisement by the proper United States Indian agent," and that the bill, when so amended, be passed.

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