

SETTLERS IN WIND RIVER VALLEY.

JULY 7, 1876.—Committed to a Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 2419.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 2419) 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 being at the time a portion of the unsurveyed public lands.

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 where 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 without making them a fair compensation for the value of the improvements made by them. The settlers having petitioned the Department for relief, the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs directed the agent in charge of said Indians to make report of the nature and value of the improvements made by said settlers; a copy of which report, under date of February 12, 1876, with the communication of the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, is herewith submitted:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., April 8, 1876.

SIR: Referring to your letter of March 10, 1875, relative to the payment of the settlers on the Shoshone and Bannock Indian reservation for their improvements, and the petition of said settlers, referred to by you, I have now the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the report of United States Indian Agent Irwin, made in accordance with instructions from this office, under date of March 31, 1875. As you have been previously advised, there are no funds at the disposal of this Department applicable to the payment of these claims.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Hon. W. R. STEELE,
House of Representatives.

J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner.

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.

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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	Green-house	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	10.....	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.

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The bill H. R. No. 2419 having been [referred to the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs for his views and recommendations in reference to the same, he, under date of May 2, 1876, makes the following recommendations:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., May 2, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 24th ult., submitting for the views of this office a copy of House bill No. 2419, for the relief of certain settlers of the Wind River Valley, Wyoming Territory.

Under office instructions of March 31, 1875, and January 26, 1876, James Irwin, United States agent for the Shoshone Indians, has furnished a tabular statement of the nature and value of the improvements made on the Indian reservation in said valley by these settlers, nine in number, amounting to \$9,871.50, which improvements were made prior to July 3, 1868, the date of the treaty establishing the Indian reservation within the limits of which they are located.

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.

I therefore return said bill with my approval, suggesting, however, the following amendment to the first section thereof:

Strike out all after the word "appraisement" in line four to and including the word "him" in line six, and insert in lieu thereof the words "made by the proper United States Indian agent."

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner.

Hon. W. R. STEELE,
House of Representatives.

Your committee, therefore, report the bill back with an amendment as recommended by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with a recommendation that the bill as amended do pass.