

INDIAN TRAINING-SCHOOL AT FORT RIPLEY, MINNESOTA.

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M E S S A G E

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

*A communication from the Secretary of the Interior relative to the establishment of an Indian training-school on the site of old Fort Ripley, in Minnesota.*

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APRIL 18, 1882.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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*To the Senate and House of Representatives :*

I transmit herewith a communication, dated the 14th instant, from the Secretary of the Interior, with draft of bill and accompanying papers, for the establishment of an Indian training-school on the site of the old Fort Ripley military reservation, in the State of Minnesota.

The subject is commended to the consideration of Congress.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
April 17, 1882.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, April 14, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith, for your information and consideration, a copy of a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of 12th instant, with accompanying correspondence, presenting a draft of a bill for the establishing of an Indian training-school on the site of the old Fort Ripley military reservation, in the State of Minnesota, which comprises about 174½ acres of land with the buildings located thereon. The restoration of this military reservation to the public domain, and the disposal of the buildings with certain of the lands, was provided in the act of April 1, 1882 (21 Statutes, page 69).

My attention was called to the advantages of this military site for the establishment of a training-school in letter from Bishop Whipple, dated Jacksonville, Fla., March 15, 1882. On reference of the subject to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, it received his recommendation, and in

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accordance with instructions from this department the bill above noted was prepared.

The subject has my approval, and I respectfully recommend that it may be presented to Congress for favorable consideration and action of that body.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
S. J. KIRKWOOD,

*Secretary*

The PRESIDENT.

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A BILL to turn over to the Department of the Interior the land and buildings at the former Fort Ripley military post, for the purpose of establishing an Indian training-school.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the northeast fraction of quarter of section seven, and lot one of section eight in township one hundred and thirty-one north, of range twenty-nine west, in the State of Minnesota, containing one hundred and seventy-four acres and forty-seven hundredths of an acre, together with buildings and improvements thereon, constituting the former military post of Fort Ripley, be, and the same are hereby, turned over to the Department of the Interior for the purpose of establishing an Indian training-school, and that the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to expend an amount not exceeding five thousand dollars out of any funds appropriated for the support of Indian schools to place said land and buildings in suitable condition for the purposes of said training-school.*

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POST-OFFICE, JACKSONVILLE, FLA.,  
March 15, 1881.

HONORABLE AND DEAR SIR: I learn by the papers that Fort Ripley Reservation and buildings are to be sold. There is no place in the United States which is so well suited for a school for the education of Indian children. You would have buildings and land for an experimental farm, firewood, and the best of water, a healthy climate, and being so near the Chippewas and Dakotas, on the line of the Northern Pacific Railway, save much of the expense of transportation. I know how deeply you are interested in Indian civilization. Will you not consult the Secretary of War, and see if this cannot be arranged?

If the fort is sold it will only bring a pittance.

With high regard, your friend,

H. B. WHIPPLE,  
*Bishop of Minnesota.*

Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, April 5, 1882.

SIR: By departmental reference of 22d ult. I had the honor to receive a letter, dated 15th ult., from Rev. H. B. Whipple, bishop of Minnesota, calling attention to the proposed sale of the abandoned government buildings at Fort Ripley, Minnesota, and the land on which they are located, and stating that "there is no place in the United States which is so well suited for a school for the education of Indian children." He says:

"You would have buildings and land for an experimental farm, firewood, the best of water, a healthy climate, and being so near the Chippewas and Dakotas on the line of the Northern Pacific Railway, save much of the expense of transportation."  
\* \* \* \* If the fort is sold it will only bring a pittance."

By act of Congress approved April, 1, 1880 (Stats. 21, p. 69), the Secretary of War

was "authorized and required to turn over to the Department of the Interior" all of the Fort Ripley military reservation except a strip of railroad land, and the second proviso to the second section of said act provides "that the Secretary of the Interior shall, prior to offering any quarter-section, half quarter-section, or quarter quarter-section whereon are situate any public buildings or improvements, erected or made by the government, cause the said tracts, with the improvements thereon, to be appraised by three disinterested persons, and upon his approval of such appraisement shall dispose of said tracts at not less than the appraised value."

Upon informal inquiry at the General Land Office it is learned that the tracts upon which the buildings and improvements are erected are the northeast fractional quarter of section seven, and lot one, of section eight, in township one hundred and thirty-one north, of range twenty-nine west, in Minnesota, containing in the aggregate one hundred and seventy four acres and forty-seven hundredths of an acre; that the land, buildings, and improvements have been appraised at four thousand four hundred and six dollars and ten cents, and that the sale is advertised to take place on the 12th of next month (May).

The fort stands on the west bank of the Mississippi, seven miles below the mouth of Crow Wing River, and is on the Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad, which connects with the Northern Pacific at Brainerd, seventeen miles from the fort. A glance at the map of Minnesota will show that it is easy of access, at small expense, for the Chippewa children of Minnesota, or for the children of the Dakotas or Sioux in Dakota, and while this is so, it is far enough from permanent Indian reservations to prevent annoying visits from the parents of the children.

The following description, taken from a report made by the Surgeon-General of the United States Army, May 1, 1875, will indicate the character and extent of the buildings referred to, which probably cost the government thirty or forty thousand dollars, but the sale of which, with the land, will probably not realize to the government more than the appraised value above stated.

The buildings at the post form three sides of a hollow square, each side being 450 feet, and the river forming the fourth side. The quarters and hospital are frame buildings, lathed and plastered inside, and covered externally with boards, sheathing-paper, and weatherboards painted. The walls are filled with brick. Four buildings, one and a half stories in height, are occupied as officers' quarters, two of which are divided each into two sets. Each of the six sets is essentially the same, and consists of a hall, four rooms, pantry, and store-room in the main building. There is an attachment in the rear, consisting of cellar, kitchen, and two small bed-rooms.

The garrison, consisting of two companies, 103 men, are quartered in the barracks, also one and a half stories high, 263 by 22 feet, with rear additions on the flanks and center. The building upon the main floor is divided into two sections; each section contains two dormitories, 32 by 20 by 11 feet, kitchen, and mess-room. The rear projection at the south end contains a dormitory, 33 by 17 feet, occupied by 12 men, a first-sergeant's room, and a room for a library. The projection at the other end of the barrack contains a similar dormitory, 20 by 17 feet, and a first-sergeant's room. The dormitories are well lighted by windows and are ventilated by shafts leading into the attic, which is unobstructed by partitions and communicates with the external air by a roof-ventilator and two openings in the front wall. The heating is by wood-stoves.

There is a veranda 8 feet wide extending along the entire front. The officers' quarters and hospital have similar verandas.

The married soldiers and laundresses are quartered in several buildings and parts of buildings scattered about the post.

In addition to the buildings thus described I learn that there are others consisting of wash-house, a magazine (which could be converted into an ice-house), store-house, stables, blacksmith's shop, barns, and out-houses. I am also reliably informed that by an expenditure of not exceeding four or five thousand dollars these buildings can be placed in excellent condition for an Indian school, as recommended by Bishop Whipple (a copy of whose letter is herewith inclosed), and believing the project to be an admirable one, I respectfully recommend that the necessary steps be taken to secure said land and buildings for the purpose herein indicated, and that in the mean time the honorable Commissioner of the General Land Office be directed to issue the necessary instructions to postpone the sale of said tracts of land and buildings.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. PRICE,  
Commissioner.

Hon. S. J. KIRKWOOD,  
Secretary of the Interior.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, April 8, 1882.*

SIR: Referring to your letter of the 5th instant in relation to the adaptability of the buildings of the abandoned Fort Ripley military reservation and the land upon which said buildings are located, about 1744 acres in extent, for Indian school purposes, you are respectfully informed that, in accordance with your recommendation, the Commissioner of the General Land Office has been directed to postpone the sale of said buildings and lands pending an application to Congress for authority for their use.

I am of opinion that Congressional action will be required, and suggest that a bill be prepared in your office granting the requisite authority for the use of the property, for presentation to Congress at an early day.

Very respectfully,

A. BELL,  
*Acting Secretary.*

The COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, April 12, 1882.*

SIR: Pursuant to the suggestion in your letter of the 8th inst., I have the honor to inclose herewith the draft of a bill authorizing the use of the land and buildings at the former Fort Ripley military post, in Minnesota, for the establishment of an Indian training-school at that point. I transmit also two copies of the report of this office, dated 5th inst., showing the advisability of action like that contemplated in the bill, and respectfully request that the matter be presented to Congress, with the favorable recommendation of the department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. PRICE,  
*Commissioner.*

Hon. S. J. KIRKWOOD,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

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