

1884-78

WHITE MOUNTAIN INDIAN RESERVATION, ARIZONA.—THE
DEER CREEK COAL FIELDS.

FEBRUARY 25, 1884.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. OURY, from the Committee on the Territories, submitted the following

R E P O R T :

[To accompany bill H. R. 1673.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1673) to correct the western and southern boundaries of the White Mountain Indian Reservation, in the Territory of Arizona, and segregate the Deer Creek coal-fields, respectfully report:

That the same has been amended, and, as amended, favorably reported back to the House, with the recommendation that the same pass.

This report is based upon facts and information obtained from the Department of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as well as from other sources, from which the committee find that the Indian reservation which the bill affects (the White Mountain Indian Reservation) covers an area of 4,200 square miles, and gives to each Indian, man, woman, and child 555 acres of land, or allowing five persons to each family, it gives to the head of each of such 2,775 acres.

Allowing for the segregation provided for in the bill (which from the best data obtainable will amount to about 450 square miles), each man, woman, and child of these Indian tribes would still have 461 acres or 301 acres more than a citizen is allowed to take up under the law. We regard such discrimination as in no sense beneficial to the Indians, while it retards the development of the country.

Your committee find that upon the land sought to be segregated from this reservation, a large number of people have settled in good faith, engaged in mining and stock raising, and have expended much money, time, and labor in these pursuits, and that a town of some importance is located on the western side thereof, and that ever since the year 1876 taxes have been paid to the general, territorial, and county governments.

In January, 1881, coal was discovered in the southern portion of the reservation in a regularly organized mining district, working under the general and territorial laws. The discoverers were poor prospectors, acting in good faith, and believing they were outside of the limits of the reservation, they made locations, recorded them in accordance with the law, and have since expended large sums of money as well as time and labor in the development of their claims.

No question has ever been raised as to the validity of any transfer of property in the said mining district (though many transactions of the kind were had), until the Government itself, by its officials, ejected the parties from the district, thereby throwing a cloud over the titles, not-

withstanding the fact that the Government had been for some time purchasing coal from the locators and claimants, practically acknowledging their ownership.

There is not, your committee find from the statements made to it, as well as from the personal knowledge of one of the committee in the lands affected by this bill, a single acre of agricultural land, and the Indians do not hunt or live on it.

The extreme scarcity of fuel and the high prices of transportation make these coal-fields an absolute necessity to the country. Public necessities demand the use of the coal. In the near vicinity are immense deposits of copper. Coke costs now \$65 per ton on account of the heavy transportation rates over the mountains from the various railroad depots to that place.

If this coal (which is a fair coking coal) was in free use, as the bill we have considered would make it, the cost of coke would be reduced so much that grades of ore running as low as 8 per cent. would be more profitable than those now used which average 15 per cent. It would also permit the working of lower grade silver and gold ores. Under present circumstances coal is brought from Oregon, and costs 3 cents per pound, and coke costs about twelve times its San Francisco price.

The committee also find that the unsettled condition of this question is now, as it has been since the first settlement was made in this section of Arizona, a fruitful source of trouble between the whites and Indians, and your committee believe that a definite settlement of this boundary, on the lines proposed in the bill, will go far to remove such troubles in the future.

That the people of Arizona are very earnest in this matter is proven by the number and nature of their petitions now on file in the office of the Secretary of the Interior.

Your committee find that the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs approve this bill and recommend its passage, and we fully concur with them.