

PROTECTION OF AMERICAN BISON AND OTHER ANIMALS

MAY 3, 1890.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. TURNER, of KANSAS, from the Committee on the Public Lands, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 6068.]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 6068), for the protection of the American bison and other animals and appropriating money to carry out the same, have considered the same and make the following report:

No other animal useful to man has ever, in a state of nature, been so numerous. A single herd of four million was in existence in 1871. In less than twenty years, by the most cruel and wanton destruction, this animal has been so nearly exterminated that probably less than two hundred now exist. The buffalo was admirably adapted to his surroundings. In the great blizzards which swept the plains in winter he turned his face to the storm and endured it in patience, protected by his shaggy coat. Where the American cattle, his successor, perishes with cold he endured without great discomfort the severest of the winter storms.

It is nearly, though almost, too late to repair the tremendous mistake committed in the destruction of this king of cattle. Mr. Jones has, at great expense, gathered together a fragment of a herd of less than one hundred.

Should this herd be permitted to separate and be destroyed the extermination of the race would be final and complete. Experience has demonstrated that a considerable range is required for their successful propagation and that they will only breed successfully in herds, a single pair being almost always barren. A portion of the tract of public lands known as "No Man's Land," is well adapted to their propagation. As with the American Indian the only way to prevent his extermination is to civilize him, so the only way to preserve the remaining buffalo is to domesticate them.

If the present small herd can be successfully domesticated it may be possible to restore again to the great plains a few fragments of the great herds that once roamed there in a wild state. The effort is a worthy one, and under this bill will involve no outlay whatever to the Government.

This generation has destroyed the buffalo. If it is possible to do so it is the duty of the same generation to in some degree make amends to posterity for the mistake which may almost be denounced as a national crime. The buffalo when domesticated, and the breeding successfully accomplished in captivity, may take his place as one of the

great food-producing animals of the world. The reservation of a tract of land suitable for the experiment is the cheapest and most convenient form in which to make the attempt of domestication of this remaining herd, and the experiment is worthy of a fair trial.

Amend to strike out the words "and appropriating money to carry out the same," from the title of the bill. And after so amending recommend that the bill be passed.

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