

MISSOULA AND NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY.

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DECEMBER 18, 1890.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 12631.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 12631) granting to the Missoula and Northern Railroad Company the right of way through the Flathead Indian Reservation in the State of Montana, submit the following report:

That a portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation in Missoula County, Mont., extends in a westerly direction across the Flathead Lake, the northerly line of said reservation crossing the lake about midway between its northerly and southerly end; that Ravalli station, the southern terminal of the proposed road, is about 45 miles south of the north line of the Flathead Indian Reservation, and about 30 miles south of the south end of the Flathead Lake. At present a stage line is operated from Ravalli to the south end of the lake. Water communication is used from that point to the settlement at the north end of the lake, this being the only present means of communication with a large and rapidly-growing settlement.

The Missoula and Northern Railroad Company proposes to construct a railroad from Ravalli station in a northerly direction to the south end of Flathead Lake, and thence north along either the east or west shore of the lake, as survey may determine to be the most practicable route, to the northerly boundary of the reservation, and from thence north to the Canadian line. The portion of the reservation over which it is proposed to construct the road is not occupied by any permanent Indian settlement, and no injury can result to the Indians from the construction of the road. The temporary use of the waters of the lake is granted to the company pending the completion of the road along the east or west shore of the lake. The construction of the line of railroad can only be successfully accomplished over the route indicated by the granting of the right of way described in the bill, as there is no other practicable route available.

All that portion of the northwestern part of Montana lying west of the main range of the Rocky Mountains and north of the Flathead Indian Reservation depends, for communication with the outside world, on wagon and stage roads, extending in a northerly direction from the Northern Pacific Railroad line, and it is intended that this wagon and stage traffic shall be supplemented by railroad communication, by the construction of the road proposed in the bill. Owing to the inability of regular lines of stage and wagon transportation companies to secure

terminal accommodations on the reservation, the present stage and freight transportation from Ravalli station across the reservation to the north is inadequate and unsatisfactory and is constantly becoming, by virtue of these causes, a prolific source of complaint and a menace to the growth and development of the fertile country north of the reservation.

Inasmuch as a large number of citizens will be accommodated by the road, which can not be constructed successfully at reasonable expense by any other route, and can be constructed and operated over the line indicated in the bill without injury to the Indians or their reservation, the committee recommends that the bill do pass.

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