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# Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting an estimate of appropriation for the Indian service in Oregon

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INDIAN SERVICE IN OREGON.

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

*An estimate of appropriation for the Indian service in Oregon.*

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JANUARY 19, 1875.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, D. C., January 15, 1875.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a report, dated the 14th instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with accompanying papers therein noted, upon the subject of the necessity which exists for the erection of a grist and saw mill at the Siletz agency in Oregon. An estimate of appropriation for the purpose above named is also inclosed, amounting to \$15,000.

The attention of Congress is respectfully invited to the subject, with a view to its favorable consideration by that body.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO,  
*Secretary.*

THE SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., January 14, 1875.*

SIR: I have the honor to present herewith copies of letters from Agent J. H. Fairchild, dated October 6 and 8, 1874, the former addressed to Senator J. H. Mitchell, and by him referred to this Office, representing the necessity for having an appropriation made by Congress during its present session to provide for the erection of a grist and saw mill at the Siletz Indian agency, Oregon, the cost of which will be about \$15,000.

By the agent's report in the premises, it is clearly shown that a urgent necessity exists for the establishment of this mill, and that <sup>n</sup> it

would result in a great saving to the Government, in addition to the benefit that would be derived therefrom by the Indians. With the view, therefore, of meeting this requirement, I have caused to be prepared, and herewith submit, an estimate of appropriation for the above-named amount, and respectfully recommend favorable action thereon by the Department and Congress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. P. SMITH,  
*Commissioner.*

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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*Estimate of appropriation required for the Indian service in Oregon.*

For this amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to furnish and erect a grist and saw mill at the Siletz Indian agency, Oregon ..... \$15,000 00

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UNITED STATES INDIAN AGENCY,  
*Siletz, October 6, 1874.*

SIR: I desire to enlist your good offices to secure a saw and grist mill for this agency. The reasons are in brief—

1st. There is no grist-mill within less than fifty miles, and consequently no possibility of flouring the wheat raised on the reservation.

2d. The potato-crop having for two seasons proved an entire failure, the Indians are compelled to subsist themselves on flour and fish. More or less flour is indispensable. Last winter I was compelled to issue about four hundred pounds, at a cost of not far from \$3,200.

3d. At Yaquina, (our only market,) while the oystermen and fishermen import all their flour, they cultivate sufficient land to supply themselves with vegetables, oats, &c. Thus, while the Indians could sell all their flour at good prices, if they had a mill, at present there is no market for anything.

4th. If they had a mill on the reservation, these Indians could not only raise wheat enough to supply themselves with flour for their own use, but surplus sufficient to procure their clothing, groceries, &c., now, in great part, furnished by the Government.

5th. It requires no argument to demonstrate how great an incentive to industry would be the possession of a mill, and the certainty of a market for their surplus wheat.

6th. With no means of converting their wheat into flour, and no potatoes, they must either receive subsistence from Government or be permitted to go outside the reservation to earn their food by their labor. The first alternative is expensive; the second, injurious to the Indians and annoying to many citizens who truly think the proper place for the Indians is on the reservation.

7th. It requires no arithmetic to prove that while, with a mill, they may, in a few years, become capable of sustaining themselves without expense to the Government, without mills they never can become self-supporting.

8th. The necessity for a saw-mill is nearly as great as for a grist-mill. The money an agent is compelled to pay at this agency for such lumber only as is indispensable would in three or four years furnish a saw-mill complete in all particulars.

Estimates of the cost of grist and saw mill are inclosed. I am confident that, if an appropriation could be secured for this purpose, the money would be re-imbursed to the Government, not to mention the advantages and encouragement to the Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. FAIRCHILD,  
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. J. H. MITCHELL,  
Washington, D. C.

(Indorsement:) Respectfully referred to the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I hope the suggestions of Mr. Fairchild may receive careful consideration, and his suggestions adopted in estimates for coming Congress.

J. H. MITCHELL.

NOVEMBER 17, 1874.

SILETZ INDIAN AGENCY,  
October 6, 1874,

*Estimated cost of saw and grist mill at Siletz Indian agency, Oregon.*

Estimated cost of saw-mill, including transportation and erection .....	\$5,000
Estimated cost of grist-mill, with machinery, transportation, and erection, complete .....	10,000
Total cost of both mills .....	15,000

The above estimates are intended to embrace every item of expense connected with building the two mills except labor of regular employés; are intended to provide good mills, of a sufficient capacity to supply all the wants of this reservation, and is the least amount, it is believed, for which the mills can be built.

Respectfully submitted.

J. H. FAIRCHILD  
United States Indian Agent

Hon. J. H. MITCHELL,  
Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES INDIAN AGENCY,  
Siletz, October 8, 1874.

SIR: I respectfully ask leave to call your attention to the necessity of securing, at the coming session of Congress, an appropriation to provide a grist and saw mill for this agency. The reasons for this are, in brief:

1st. There is no grist-mill nearer than fifty miles, and no way of converting the wheat raised here into flour. Since the entire failure of the potato-crop, we are compelled to look to flour for subsistence.

2d. The situation of this agency is such that the only possible market for produce is to the fishermen of Yaquina Bay. These all cultivate small parcels of land, raising what vegetables, oats, &c., they require, but, there being no mill near, are compelled to import all their flour.

3d. While, therefore, there is no market open to these Indians for anything they could sell in exchange for flour, there is a good market for all the flour they could produce.

4th. Flour being necessary for their subsistence, and not being able to exchange produce for it, they must either receive it from Government or be permitted to leave the reservation to earn it by their labor.

5th. While there are many sick, infirm, destitute, &c., who must receive from Government, yet to constantly supply near 1,000 persons with flour would be very expensive to Government, and have a bad effect on the Indians.

To permit large bodies of them to be absent from the reservation is annoying to many white citizens, and injurious to the Indians. It should not be permitted. Their proper place is on the reservation.

6th. Had we a mill, the Indians could raise not only wheat enough to supply themselves with bread, but enough surplus to procure groceries, clothing, &c., by the sale of flour.

7th. The work done in the carpenter and blacksmith shops at present gratis, could, if there was anything from the sale of which money could be realized, be charged to the Indians and payment collected in wheat, the sale of which would go far toward paying the expenses of those shops. At present it is useless to charge for the work done, as, if we collect grain, the only use we can make of it is to issue to the Indians. Of course there will continue to be peculiar cases for whom work must be done gratis.

8th. Had we a mill to convert our wheat into flour, the tolls from reapers, thrashers, grist-mill, and the charges in blacksmith and carpenter shops, would go *very far* toward rendering this agency self-sustaining. Indeed, I am of opinion that, with judicious management, this end would be reached in a very few years.

9th. The necessity for a saw-mill is nearly as great. The money we are compelled to pay for only such lumber as cannot be dispensed with, would in three or four years pay for a good mill. The Indians are anxious to build good houses and barns. These last are very much needed, but the funds appropriated each year for this agency are required in so many directions, that I am able only in a very limited manner to supply their actual necessities in this direction. I need not say how great would be the encouragement to the Indians if we had a saw-mill, where they could procure such lumber as was needed.

10th. The estimated cost of both mills is only \$15,000. This is intended to provide good mills, complete in all particulars, capable of supplying all the requirements of this reservation. Labor of regular employes who could be employed in building the mills is not, of course, included in the estimate.

Estimated cost of saw-mill, including transportation and erection .....	\$5, 000
Estimated cost of grist-mill, complete in all particulars.....	10, 000
<b>Total for both mills.....</b>	<b>15, 000</b>

This is believed to be the *least* amount for which good mills can be built at this place. Since I have occupied the position of agent here (since April 1, 1873,) there has been used on this reservation, including the coming winter, not less than 1,300 barrels of flour. This has cost an average of \$8 per barrel, coin = \$10,400, more than the estimated cost of a mill.

Including what will be required for the winter, I have purchased, on account of the Government, about 817 barrels, and I know I have not purchased a pound not absolutely necessary. The balance has been bought by the Indians, employes, &c., and the estimate of 1,300 barrels

is undoubtedly too low. The Indians have also bought a large amount of lumber. I feel certain that more has been paid from this reservation for these two items—flour and lumber—than would build the mills complete in every particular, and that within two years, until these mills are provided, there is no reasonable prospect of this agency becoming self-sustaining.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. FAIRCHILD,  
*United States Indian Agent.*

Hon. E. P. SMITH,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

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