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Territory of Pembina

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Recommended Citation

S. Rep. No. 864, 46th Cong., 3rd Sess. (1881)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 14, 1881.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1516.]

The Committee on Territories, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1516) "Establishing the Territory of Pembina, and providing a temporary government therefor," having duly considered the same, beg leave to report it back to the Senate with the recommendation that it be amended by striking out all of section nine after the word "Territory," in line seven, and when so amended that it do pass. In support of this recommendation the committee submit the following statement:

The Territory of Dakota, as now constituted, embraces about 152,000 square miles. Its soil is very rich and fertile, with but a small per cent. of waste lands, and is capable of sustaining a heavy population. It is the third in size of all the political divisions of the government (not including Alaska), California and Texas only being larger. Its population, according to the late census, is 135,181, and shows the largest per cent. of increase of any State or Territory in the Union.

The 46th degree of north latitude, the proposed line of division, is the geographical center, the south line being the 43d and the north line 49th. Divided on this line the proposed Territory of Pembina will contain over 71,000 square miles, and the southern portion, the Territory of Dakota, over 81,000 square miles. The population of Pembina will be, according to the late census, over 36,000, and that of Dakota, over 98,000, and increasing in both sections with unprecedented rapidity. The settlements in the present Territory are divided into three distinct communities—that of Southeastern Dakota, that of Northern Dakota (Pembina), and that of the Black Hills. These communities are separated by long reaches of unsettled country, and at present have no channels of intercommunication. All the trade and commerce north of 46° north latitude is tributary to and controlled by the Northern Pacific Railway, and finds its market at Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Duluth, and Milwaukee, with no railroad connection with the southern portion. South of 46° north latitude the country is traversed by two principal lines of railroad running east and west as far as the Missouri River, being the Chicago and Northwestern Railway and the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul Railway. These companies have obtained by an agreement made with the Indians, by and with the advice and consent of the government, the right of way over the Great Sioux Reservation lying west of the Missouri River, and are preparing to construct their lines through to the Hills in the very near future.

These roads will unite these communities of Southeast Dakota and the Black Hills in a common interest, bring them into close contact, make their lines of travel and commerce the same, and, with the diversified industries afforded, will rapidly develop into a rich and prosperous State. Northern Dakota (Pembina) is a part of the great wheat producing region of the Northwest. It is also rich in coal fields and pasture lands, and contains all the elements of wealth and prosperity, and will, in a few years, have all the requisites of statehood. The rapid population of this Territory is not transient, or brought about by unhealthy or exciting causes, but is steady and permanent, resulting in the building up of towns and villages, farming communities, with churches, schools, improved highways, and all the concomitants of permanent settlement and civilization.

It is conceded that the division of this vast Territory must be made sooner or later, and is only a question of time, and your committee are clearly of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. It will then be definitely determined where the lines of the future States are to be. This is very desirable, when we consider that these Territories, in their rapid growth and development, must locate and construct hospitals for the insane, blind, deaf and dumb, provide a prison, and locate a capital most convenient for all the people. No intelligent steps in this direction can be taken while it remains unsettled as to what shall constitute the future State. This condition of uncertainty retards the growth and proper development, postpones the necessary preparation for statehood, and leaves all things in an unsettled state.

Your committee are therefore of the opinion that it will be greatly to the advantage of this Territory to be divided, in accordance with the unanimous wish almost of the entire people of the Territory, that each section may set about laying the foundations for future improvements and ultimate statehood intelligently and wisely, and therefore recommend the passage of the bill with the amendment.

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