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Letter from the Secretary of War, relative to the subdivision of the reservations of Forts Dodge and Wallace, and the sale of buildings thereon.

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MILITARY RESERVATIONS OF FORTS DODGE AND WALLACE, KANSAS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

RELATIVE TO

The subdivision of the reservations of Forts Dodge and Wallace, and the sale of buildings thereon.

JULY 21, 1882.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, July 20, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of correspondence relative to the disposal of the lands and buildings at the abandoned military posts of Forts Dodge and Wallace, Kansas.

In a telegram dated July 10, 1882 (copy herewith), Lieutenant-General Sheridan states that, in view of the delay which is occurring in disposing of the public buildings at said posts, he and General Pope recommend that they be sold in order that the Army may be relieved of the responsibility and expense of their further care.

The military reservations of Forts Dodge and Wallace have already been reported to the present Congress as no longer needed for military purposes, and authority asked to dispose of them (*vide* H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 39, Forty-seventh Congress, first session, pp. 3, 6, 22, and 23, accompanying).

Attention is respectfully invited to the inclosed copy of Ex. Doc. 195, Forty-seventh Congress, first session, showing action now pending in Congress respecting the Fort Dodge Reservation, from which it appears that the Secretary of the Interior has recommended an amendment to the act of December 15, 1880, opening up to settlement that portion of the reservation north of the railroad right-of-way, for a reason that a portion of the reservation ordered sold is included in the *Osage Indian Trust Lands* (treaty of 1865).

The chief quartermaster of the Department of the Missouri expresses the belief that, as many of the buildings at said posts are built of stone and adobe, if sold *to be removed* they would bring about \$10,000, but if sold with the immediate grounds upon which they stand will bring about \$50,000.

In view of the advantage that it seems will accrue to the government

from the sale of the buildings in connection with the land upon which they are located, it is respectfully requested that such legislation be had as will authorize the Secretary of War to subdivide the reservations in question, and sell the buildings with the grounds upon which they are located.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
W. E. CHANDLER,
Acting Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

[Telegram.]

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Ill., June 20, 1882.

General R. C. DRUM, *Washington D. C. :*

Your dispatch of this date about Fort Dodge received and forwarded for the consideration of General Pope, the department commander.

My orders in abandoning Fort Dodge were to transfer to Fort Supply such public property as could be made useful in the repairs of that post. I am willing to sell the post or give it away. Our experience heretofore in the sale of buildings at abandoned military posts has been about equivalent to giving them away. To sell the buildings and the land on which they stand requires an act of Congress.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

[Indorsement.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 21, 1882.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

This dispatch is in reply to telegram of yesterday to General Sheridan communicating to him the views of Senator Plumb as to the disposition of the buildings at Fort Dodge.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

[Translated copy of telegram.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI,
Chicago, Ill., June 25, 1882.

General JNO. POPE, *Fort Leavenworth, Kans. :*

The following telegram is repeated to you for the necessary action.
 By command of Lieutenant-General Sheridan.

R. WILLIAMS,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 24.*

General P. H. SHERIDAN, *Chicago, Ill. :*

Your dispatch of this date relative to buildings at Fort Dodge received.

The Secretary of War has no opinion on the subject of disposition of buildings, but as representations are made that the buildings can be sold as they stand (to be removed) to better advantage of the government than by tearing them down and using the material elsewhere, he desires to know whether any efforts have been made by General Pope to ascertain if this is the fact. If he has not, the Secretary thinks such efforts should be made.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

[Indorsements.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI,
Fort Leavenworth, Kans., June 26, 1882.

Respectfully referred to the chief quartermaster of the department for report as soon as possibly can on the value of the buildings as they stand and what they will sell for.
 By order of Brigadier-General Pope.

E. R. PLATT,
Major and Assistant Adjutant-General.

CHIEF QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI.

Fort Leavenworth, Kans., June 28, 1882.

Respectfully returned to the adjutant-general of the department.

As many of the buildings at Fort Dodge are built of stone and of adobe, it is believed that if sold to be removed they will bring about \$10,000; but if sold with immediate grounds on which they stand, thus avoiding removal, it is believed that they would bring about \$50,000.

J. D. BINGHAM,

Deputy Quartermaster-General, Chief Quartermaster.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI,

Fort Leavenworth, Kans., June 29, 1882.

Respectfully forwarded to the adjutant-general of the Military Division of the Missouri.

Attention is invited to the indorsement of the chief quartermaster of the department. The ground on which the buildings stand cannot be sold without an act of Congress.

JOHN POPE,

Brevet Major-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,

Chicago, July 3, 1882.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

P. H. SHERIDAN,

Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

Washington, July 6, 1882.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, in connection with previous papers in the case submitted by me on the 28th instant (ult.?).

W. T. SHERMAN,

General.

[Telegram.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,

*Washington, June 20, 1882.*Lieutenant-General SHERIDAN, *Chicago, Ill.:*

Senator Plumb advises the Secretary of War that, in dismantling and removing parts of buildings at Fort Dodge, the best and most economical disposition is not being made of government property; that buildings ought to be sold at public or private sale on the ground. The Secretary desires these views submitted for such action as you think proper.

R. C. DRUM,

Adjutant-General.

[Telegram.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,

*Washington, D. C., June 20, 1882.*Lieut. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN, *Chicago, Ill.:*

Further representations made to the Secretary of War as to improvidence of tearing down the buildings at Fort Dodge suggest whether it would not be best to defer operations in this direction until satisfactorily informed which would be best for the government interests—to tear down the buildings and dispose of the material by sale or transportation elsewhere, or to sell the buildings as they stand at private or public sale, subject to removal from the reservation.

R. C. DRUM,

Adjutant-General.

[Telegram.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,

*Chicago, Ill., June 21, 1882.*General R. C. DRUM, *Washington, D. C.:*

Please inform the Secretary of War that I have directed General Pope to suspend operations at Fort Dodge until it is ascertained if the public property there can be

disposed of by public or private sale with more economy to the government than transferring it to Fort Supply, where it is very much needed.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

[First indorsement.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 21, 1882.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War in connection with previous telegram from General Sheridan, submitted this day, and inviting attention to inclosed copy of telegram to the Hon. Mr. Ryan.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

[Telegram.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 21, 1882.

Hon. THOMAS RYAN, *House of Representatives, Capitol:*

General Sheridan reports he has suspended operations at Fort Dodge until he can make inquiry whether property can be profitably sold, as you suggested.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

[Telegram.]

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANS., *June 21, 1882.*

General P. H. SHERIDAN, *Chicago, Ill.:*

Your telegram stopping the dismantling of Fort Dodge received, and orders given accordingly. The material at Fort Dodge is very essential to quarter the troops sent from here to Supply. If the buildings are sold it will be for a small price and the money turned into the Treasury. Other material of the same kind and quality will have to be bought for the same purpose, and will probably cost twice as much. Unless the money received for the sale of goods is applied to build quarters for the troops to be removed from there, it will not be economy to sell. Even in this case the economy is doubtful.

JOHN POPE,
Brevet Major-General, Commanding.

[First indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, June 23, 1882.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI,
Fort Leavenworth, Kans., June 23, 1882.

Col. R. WILLIAMS,

Adjutant-General Military Division of the Missouri, Chicago, Ill.:

COLONEL: I telegraphed you this morning asking whether I should consider the dismantling of Fort Dodge to be permanently put a stop to by the order of the War Department, so that I might know whether to keep the company of infantry retained there to do the work of dismantling and shipping to Fort Supply, or send the company at once to its post. Colonel Potter, under my order, is now at Dodge to superintend this work, and to ship to his post, to which two-thirds of the late garrison at Dodge is ordered, all material that can be judiciously and economically used to shelter these troops.

I cannot say what Fort Dodge would sell for in open market, but certainly I should say it would not bring half the value of the material which we could use at Supply. The money received from the sale of the post would of course revert to the Treasury, and it be necessary, therefore, to take out of the appropriation for the next fiscal year the amount needed to shelter the troops at Supply, which we could probably do with the material we could get out of Dodge.

The War Department can tell as well as I can, whether, in view of the interests of the Army and the economy of sheltering the troops sent away from Dodge, the sale of this post to private parties or the transfer of the materials to Supply, will best serve the interests of the military service.

I respectfully ask an early reply for obvious reasons.

I am, Colonel, very respectfully your obedient servant,

JOHN POPE,
Brevet Major-General, Commanding.

[First indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, June 26, 1882.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

In accordance with the wishes of the Secretary of War, I have instructed General Pope to ascertain if it will be more advantageous to the government to sell the buildings at Fort Dodge than to tear them down and use the material at Fort Supply.

This paper has in the mean time been received and I forward it for the information of the proper authority.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

[Second indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., June 28, 1882.

Respectfully submitted to the honorable Secretary of War.

Usually, when a military post is abandoned it has been found more economical to dismantle the buildings and use elsewhere the doors, windows, casings, floors, &c., at the nearest post. If sold at auction the money received is nothing, because it must go back to the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

W. T. SHERMAN, *General.*

[Telegram.]

General R. C. DRUM, *Washington, D. C. :*

CHICAGO, ILL., *June 24, 1882.*

I respectfully request that the honorable Secretary of War decide what shall be done with the buildings at Fort Dodge as speedily as possible. General Pope and myself are of the opinion that they can be best utilized on repairs at Forts Supply and Riley, but we do not object to any other disposition of them which may be thought better.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

[Telegram.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 24, 1882.

General P. H. SHERIDAN, *Chicago, Ill. :*

Your dispatch of this date, relative to buildings at Fort Dodge, received.

The Secretary of War has no opinion on the subject of the disposition of buildings, but as representations are made that the buildings can be sold as they stand to be removed to the better advantage of the government than by tearing them down and using the material elsewhere, he desires to know whether any efforts have been made by General Pope to ascertain if this is the fact. If he has not, the Secretary thinks such efforts should be made.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, D. C., June 20, 1882.

Hon. ROBERT T. LINCOLN,
Secretary of War :

SIR: Dispatches from Fort Dodge, Kans., say that the military buildings on the reservations are being dismantled in order that some articles of value may be taken

to Camp Supply. This will do the government no good—will, in fact, be expense without compensation, and if the government is to be benefited it would be far better to authorize the sale of all the improvements at public or private sale. In view of these facts and of the feeling existing on the frontier at this action, I respectfully ask that the demolition be suspended by order, to be transmitted by wire, until definite action can be taken for the disposition of the entire property.

Respectfully, yours,

P. B. PLUMB.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, June 22, 1882.

SIR: Referring to your letter of the 20th instant, relative to the disposition of property at Fort Dodge, Kans., and to my reply thereto of the same date, advising you that the substance of your letter had been communicated to General Sheridan by telegraph for an expression of his views on the subject, I have now the honor to quote for your information, below, a telegram from that officer, just received:

"Your dispatch of this date about Fort Dodge, received, and forwarded for the consideration of General Pope, the department commander. My orders abandoning Fort Dodge were to transfer to Fort Supply such public property as could be made useful in the repairs of that post. I am willing to sell the post or give it away. Our experience heretofore in the sale of buildings at abandoned military posts has been about equivalent to giving them away. To sell the buildings and the land on which they stand requires an act of Congress."

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Hon. P. B. PLUMB,
United States Senate.

ROBERT T. LINCOLN,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, June 20, 1882.

SIR: I have your letter of to-day respecting the disposition of property at Fort Dodge.

Fort Dodge was ordered to be abandoned as a military station some two months ago, and the proper disposition directed to be made of the government property.

Such a matter as this is in charge of Lieutenant-General Sheridan, and I cannot interfere with his action, having at present no knowledge of what his orders in detail are, nor any information on which to base an opinion of my own.

In consequence of your letter, however, I have directed that a telegram be sent to General Sheridan, of which a copy is inclosed to you herewith.

Very respectfully, yours,

Hon. P. B. PLUMB,
United States Senate.

ROBERT T. LINCOLN,
Secretary of War.

[Telegram.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 20, 1882.

Lieut. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN, Chicago, Ill.:

Senator Plumb advises the Secretary of War that in dismantling and removing parts of buildings at Fort Dodge, the best and most economical disposition is not being made of government property; that buildings ought to be sold at public or private sale on the ground. The Secretary desires these views submitted for such action as you think proper.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

CHICAGO, ILL., July 10, 1882.

General R. C. DRUM, Washington, D. C.:

In view of the delay which is occurring in disposing of the public buildings at Forts Dodge and Wallace, General Pope and myself recommend that the Secretary of War give authority to sell them to the highest bidder, after advertising for thirty days. As it is now, we have to keep a company at Fort Dodge and a detachment at Fort Wallace to watch them.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, July 13, 1882.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, with previous papers, and inviting attention to the accompanying report of the Adjutant-General.

W. T. SHERMAN, *General*.

Report in case of proposed disposition of buildings at the abandoned posts of Forts Dodge and Wallace, Kansas.

Pursuant to instructions of the War Department, communicated in telegram of June 26, 1882, from this office to Lieutenant-General Sheridan, and by him repeated the next day to the department commander, General Pope, forwarded June 29, 1882, report of his chief quartermaster, setting forth that, as many of the buildings at Fort Dodge are built of stone and adobe, it is believed that if sold to be removed they will bring about \$10,000; but if sold with the immediate ground upon which they stand, thus avoiding removal, it is believed that they would bring about \$50,000; General Pope added that the ground upon which the buildings stand cannot be sold without an act of Congress.

July 10, 1882, the Lieutenant-General telegraphs that in view of the delay which is occurring in disposing of the public buildings at Forts Dodge and Wallace, he and General Pope recommend that the Secretary of War give authority to sell them to the highest bidder, after advertising for thirty days, in order to withdraw troops, now watching them. (In this connection it is remarked that General Pope has recently recommended the appointment of Mr. James Langton as keeper at Fort Dodge, in which the Lieutenant-General concurred. Papers returned to War Department by General Sherman June 27, 1882.)

In connection with instructions of the Adjutant-General to prepare data upon which the Secretary of War can prepare a letter to Congress, recommending sale of lands on which the buildings at these two posts stand, with amount of land covered by the buildings, their location, size, &c., the following is respectfully submitted:

The disposition of the existing military reservations and posts of Forts Dodge and Wallace has already been recommended to the present Congress, with statement as to lands and buildings. (*Vide* Ex. Doc. H. R. No. 39, Forty-seventh Congress, first session, pp. 3, 6, 22, and 23.)

It does not appear from information in the Adjutant-General's Office what amount of land is occupied by the buildings at these posts, but they have the usual accommodations for three company posts, with stables, &c.

Attention is especially invited to the accompanying H. Ex. Doc. No. 195, Forty-seventh Congress, first session, showing action now pending in Congress respecting the Fort Dodge reservation, from which it appears that the Secretary of the Interior has recommended an amendment to the act of December 15, 1880, opening up to settlement that portion of the reservation north of the railroad right of way, for the reason that a portion of the reservation ordered sold is included in the Osage Indian trust lands (treaty, 1865). From an examination of the map appended to the document, it would appear that, with the exception of a portion in the northeast corner, the entire reservation of Dodge, now under military control, including the post buildings, is south of the north boundary of the trust lands and included therein.

Papers upon which the abandonment of these posts was authorized by the Secretary of War, and containing history, &c., are now in the Secretary's office, having been sent by the General of the Army, May, 25, 1882, accompanying the Lieutenant-General's report of May 22, 1882, upon this subject and that of Texas posts.

Respectfully submitted.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, July 12, 1882.