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Crow Indian Reservation.

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Recommended Citation

H.R. Rep. No. 80, 51st Cong., 1st Sess. (1890)

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CROW INDIAN RESERVATION.

FEBRUARY 15, 1890.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 526.]

The Crow Indian Reservation in Montana embraces an area of about 6,000,000 acres.

That upon this vast tract of land, about 2,500 Indians are located, according to the best testimony we have been able to procure, including the statement of Colonel Howard, who has spent considerable time in surveying lands on the reservation and making allotments to the Indians in severalty. The tribe is located entirely east of the divide between the Clarke's Fork River and Pryors Creek. These streams run nearly parallel from the south into the Yellowstone River. West of this divide the approximate area is about 670,000 acres. Within that area no lands have been allotted to Indians, nor are the Indians now settled upon, or in the habit of camping upon, or traveling over any portion of this ground.

That heretofore allotments have been made to the Crow Indians to the extent of 234,080 acres, and the acreage yet to be allotted will aggregate about 500,000 acres. All these allotments have been made east of the divide between Clarke's Fork River and Pryors Creek, and east of that divide there will still remain over three and a half million acres of land after all allotments shall have been made to all the Indians in the tribe. It is therefore evident to your committee that the Indians have no use whatever for the unoccupied portion of the reservation lying west of the divide, between Pryors Creek and Clarke's Fork.

That portion of the reservation thus unoccupied is composed of rich valley lands, well watered and suited for agriculture, together with certain mountainous portions, in which minerals have been discovered and developed to a considerable extent by prospectors. It is known that in the easterly part of said strip, along the banks of Clarke's Fork River, there are splendid deposits of bituminous coal, while on the westerly edge of the reservation the deposit of copper, gold, lead, and silver ores is known to be extensive. The Northern Pacific Railroad extends along and to some extent through this westerly portion of the reservation along the Yellowstone River, and prosperous settlements have grown up along the line of that road. The same is true as to the westerly end of the reservation, while on the south of this westerly portion of the reservation the mining camp of Cooke City has been developed to a very considerable extent and with great promise of future prosperity.

There is likewise developed just south of this strip west of the divide

aforesaid the flourishing town of Red Lodge, containing a population of about 1,000 souls, and dependent upon the development of the vast coal deposit upon what is known as the Rocky Fork River, a stream running parallel to and west of Clarke's Fork.

It will thus be seen that on the north, the west, and the south, this unoccupied portion of the Crow Reservation is surrounded by thrifty settlements of people devoted to the development of the resources of the contiguous country. This portion of the reservation constitutes a barrier, separating the people of the Yellowstone Valley from the settlements south of the reservation, and is, therefore, not only unproductive, but in its present condition, under the jurisdiction of the General Government and not subject to settlement in any way, this west end of the Crow Reservation is a positive detriment to the people of Montana, while of no value whatever to the Crow Indian tribe.

Your committee therefore recommends that the bill providing for the opening of negotiations with the Crow Indians looking to the purchase of the westerly portion of the said reservation by the United States be passed, with an amendment fixing the summit of the divide between Pryors Creek and Clarke's Fork River as the westerly limit to the Crow Reservation, and that the Secretary of the Interior be authorized to appoint three commissioners instead of five; that the word "five" be stricken out of line 5 of said bill and "three" inserted in lieu thereof.