

10-10-1885

Report of the Governor of Montana, 1885

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indian and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 1, 49th Cong., 1st Sess. (1885)

This House Executive Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact darinfox@ou.edu.

REPORT
OF THE
GOVERNOR OF MONTANA.

HELENA, *October 10, 1885.*

SIR: Complying with your request of August 24, 1884, I have the honor to submit the following suggestions and statements of the affairs and condition of the Territory of Montana.

Having entered upon the discharge of the duties of this office since the close of the fiscal year, I am unable to do (so far as statistics are concerned) more than to direct your attention to such matters as can be gleaned from the biennial reports of the auditor and treasurer of the Territory. From these it appears that the total assessment of property in the Territory for the year 1884 amounted to \$49,976,007.91, the same being an increase of \$5,000,000 (in round numbers) over the previous year. It should be remembered that the assessment does not give the full value of our property, and does not include our mines, which are worth a great many millions.

POPULATION.

No census of the population of the Territory has been taken since 1880, at which time it was 39,157. At present it can only be estimated by the total vote cast at the general election in November, 1884, which, as appears from the report of the auditor and treasurer, was 26,969. From the same official source it appears that at the preceding general election the total vote cast in 1882 was 23,318. The increase has been greater during the past two years than at any other period, and our population may be fairly estimated at 100,000 to 110,000.

AGRICULTURE.

The numerous valleys of the Territory are remarkably fertile, with proper facilities for irrigation yielding large returns in wheat, oats, barley, and all kinds of vegetables, unsurpassed in quality.

Owing to the high price of labor here, as in all mining countries, and the great distance from the markets of the world, our farmers have been unable to compete successfully in foreign markets with those of Dakota on the east and Washington and Oregon on the west; consequently nothing more is attempted than the supply of the home demand, which is large, owing to the great number of men employed in the mines. In all those portions of the Territory where the necessary care and attention has been given to the planting and cultivation of fruit trees it has been demonstrated that the hardy varieties of fruit of all kinds can be successfully raised. Small fruits of all kinds succeed everywhere in the Territory and the yield is simply enormous.

INDIAN DEPREDACTIONS.

I am advised from reliable sources that during the past season numerous depredations have been committed upon the rights of stock-growers by roving bands of Indians who have been suffered to leave their reservations and to roam promiscuously through a region of country where there is absolutely no game, and where to sustain life these Indians have killed cattle running upon the ranges, and in several instances have run off the horses belonging to the cattlemen. This has been carried on to such an extent that the stockmen have become greatly and justly exasperated. I can but renew the request so frequently made by my predecessors, that some such action be taken by your Department as will result in restraining and confining these Indians upon their reservations, which embrace an empire of the fairest and best portion of the Territory, and from which the whites are rigidly excluded.

RESERVATIONS.

From statistics furnished by the United States surveyor-general's office for Montana, it appears that three Indian reservations in this Territory embrace an area of 45,000 square miles, including nearly thirty million acres of the finest agricultural and grazing lands to be found on the continent. I would earnestly urge upon your department the necessity of cutting down these reservations to a size commensurate with the needs of the Indians. The greater portion of these lands, so necessary for the use of actual settlers, is of no use whatever to the Indians. Since the extinction of the buffalo there is little or no game, and but a small portion, if any, of these lands are cultivated. Why not throw the reservations open for settlement and sale, reserving a portion for the Indians, to be held by them in severalty? Break up their tribal relations, and reserve a portion of the proceeds of the sale of the lands for the use and benefit of the Indians during the period and process of education and civilization. Without troubling you with details which will suggest themselves to you, such a policy would be charity to the Indians and result in furnishing homes to hundreds of thousands of our own race, besides furnishing the world with over a million cattle which would and could be grazed and sustained on these lands. That they (the Indians) can be educated and civilized has been demonstrated by the fathers at Saint Ignatius Mission in their boarding-schools and workshops on the Jocko Reservation in this Territory, and doubtless at other places.

STOCK-RAISING.

Next to mining, stock-raising is the largest and leading industry in the Territory. According to the official report of the auditor and treasurer for the fiscal year ending December 31, 1884, the whole number of horses assessed was 99,843; mules and asses, 2,534; sheep, 593,896; cattle, 509,768. Since the assessment there have been a large number of cattle driven into the Territory. Allowing for these and under assessment and the increase, I would estimate that we now have in the Territory—

	Head.
Cattle	900,000
Horses	120,000
Sheep	1,200,000

EXPORTS.

While there are no statistics giving the exact exports, yet through the railroad companies, cattle and sheep organizations, mining companies' reports, &c., it can be approximated very closely.

Mr. Harrison, United States assayer, and secretary of one of our largest cattle associations, has assisted me in making the following estimate of exports for the past twelve months:

Silver, gross value, at 105.....	\$10,000,000
Copper, gross value, at 11 cents	7,000,000
Gold, gross value.....	2,500,000
Lead, gross value, at 4 cents	750,000
Beef cattle, 75,000 head, gross value.....	4,500,000
Wool, 6,000,000 pounds.....	1,400,000
Peltries and furs.....	250,000
Total gross value of exports.....	26,400,000

MINES AND MINING.

Gold was discovered in small quantities in 1861, but none to speak of until 1862, when mining commenced in earnest and on a large scale, drawing people here from every State in the Union and from almost every country. For ten years the average yield of gold from "placer diggings" was \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 per annum. This class of mines, being of easy access and requiring no capital, were rapidly exhausted. As they gave out, gold and silver quartz mining was commenced, which required capital as well as muscle, and was at first slow in development. Ten years ago the yield from "quartz mining" was not over \$1,000,000 per annum; now it is, as stated, about \$21,000,000. Mines and mining caused the settlement of this country. Stop our mining and you not only stop the present surprising increase of population, progress, and prosperity, but, in my opinion, the country would lose the greater portion of its inhabitants. It is true that our agricultural interests are large and flourishing, our valleys being many and fertile and capable of sustaining many more people than now occupy them—probably twenty times as many—but, as before stated, the distance from markets and the necessity of irrigation so adds to the expense that settlement would be deferred for years.

Our mines employ thousands of men—the best paid labor in the world—and make a home market for our farmers, thereby insuring profitable cultivation and settlement of the country. It is fair to say that grazing cattle, sheep, and horse-raising do not depend upon the successful working of our mines; but the grazing capacity of the Territory is limited, and the tendency is for cattle to accumulate in the hands of a few persons, principally because large herds can be handled at less cost per head than small ones. Hence, if this was the only occupation our population would be small. Though the development of our quartz mines has hardly commenced, they produced, as already shown, in the past twelve months, \$20,250,000. Of this amount \$10,000,000 was

SILVER.

In all of our silver, as it is extracted from the ore, there is from 20 to 35 per cent. of its gross value gold, chemically combined with it. One-fourth of the value of the product of our copper mines is silver chemically combined with the copper. Our lead would not pay for the

mining except for the silver it contains, and its uses in collecting the silver and gold in the process of smelting. Our copper mines at Butte, with over two and one-half millions in their works alone, are barely paying running expenses. A very little further depreciation of their silver contents, and that industry is ruined, and thousands of men thrown out of employment.

What is true with us, in regard to silver and its connected and dependent interests, is largely true of all of the other mineral producing Territories and States. Destroy silver, or, which is the same thing, stop its being mined, by a little further depreciation, and the direct loss will reach at least \$100,000,000 per annum in metals and other interests depending upon it. To see this industry upon which so much depends decried, discouraged, and threatened by our own people and neighbors is most unreasonable and unjust.

It seems to me that the East should at least treat the metal upon which our very existence depends as well, and with the same consideration, as other peoples of the earth do. The most thrifty nations of Europe, France, Belgium, and Holland give it a greater legal-tender valuation by over 3 per cent. than our Government does, and although they are purchasers and importers of silver, they have continued its use as legal-tender money, until each individual inhabitant has about three and one-half times as much as each individual inhabitant of the United States. They have from \$12 to \$14 per capita, we only \$3.75. We not only produce what we use as money, but a good portion of that purchased and used by them.

We produce 45 per cent. of all that is produced in the world. The present coinage only adds about 45 cents per capita, per annum; having only about \$3.75 per head, it would require at least twenty-five years to coin the same amount per head of our population as they have, and require from twelve to fourteen years to get an amount equal to that held and owned by France alone. Is it then unreasonable to ask for our people that the Government continue to coin silver until the amount equals that held by other commercial nations? Silver has been used as money from time immemorial. The government could at least give a reasonably fair trial by continuing its coinage until our people get as much as other commercial nations have per capita, and then, it would seem to me, is time enough to think of stopping its use as currency. We ask it, not alone because its stoppage would be disastrous to this and to other territories (inevitably if the country that produces it destroys its use as a money factor it will depreciate to a fatal point) and seriously affect the adjoining States, but because the great majority of the people of the United States would be injured thereby.

Certainly, to destroy a part of our currency, would greatly increase the purchasing power of the remainder, thereby enhancing gold, proportionately reducing the price of all commodities and greatly and directly injuring the debtor class of the nation. To me, this result—enhancing the value of gold—is the moving object and cause of the existing organized war on silver. Gold or a great portion of it, is collected and held by a few selfish individuals, and if they can succeed in destroying silver as a legal tender money (which would stop the product of the metal) they would then add in value about 20 per cent. to their hoarded gold. I do not mean to say that these are the only persons who are opposing the further coinage of silver. Nevertheless, they are the moving power and have organized a war against it to “bear” and destroy it. They are predicting dire disaster from the continued coinage, claiming that it will “bankrupt the Government,” “flood the country by making it a dump-

ing ground for silver," "drain the country of gold," &c. And this, in the face of the facts, that the most prosperous nations of Europe have from three to five times the silver that there is in the United States. France with three times as much, having imported the past ten years over three hundred millions of gold—more than they exported. The best banks of the world have from 50 to 60 per cent. (taken together) of their reserve in silver and are prosperous, with their stock selling at a large premium.

After seven years of continued coinage, we are exporting more silver than importing, and importing more gold now than exporting. Once the "bear howl" is stopped—made to control legislation to the end named—there will be no trouble in absorbing the coinage.

In behalf of our people, I beseech the Government to continue the coinage of silver, and to use a portion of the profit accruing thereby, in distributing it throughout the West, where I know it is needed. The Government, in almost the exclusive interests of the people of one portion of our country, compels our people to pay a burdensome protective tariff on the iron and manufactured articles of that section. They cannot in equity, and will not, object to so reasonable a request.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. T. HAUSER,
Governor.

Hon. L. Q. C. LAMAR,
Secretary of the Interior.