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Delegate from Alaska to House of Representatives of the United States.

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DELEGATE FROM ALASKA TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 12, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of
the Union and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 3826.]

The Committee on the Territories, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3826) entitled "A bill providing for the election of a Delegate from the District of Alaska to the House of Representatives of the United States," have had it under consideration, and respectfully report the same with the recommendation that it do pass.

A similar bill was unanimously reported by the Committee on the Territories of the House of Representatives near the close of the Fifty-third Congress, but too late for further action, in support of which that committee said:

The isolated condition of the Territory of Alaska and the great distance from the seat of Government renders it impracticable for Congress to know the condition of the Territory. It has received but small attention from Congress since the passage of the act organizing a district government in 1884. The development of the country, the increase of population, and the investment of capital demand a more perfect government and more legislation by Congress, which can only be formulated by those who are acquainted with the environment and needs of the Territory.

In submitting a like unanimous report in favor of the passage of this bill your committee deem it proper to enlarge somewhat upon the views thus briefly and forcibly stated by the committee of the Fifty-third Congress.

The District of Alaska has a surface area of 577,000 square miles, or one-sixth that of the whole United States and Territories, and by its location is of commanding importance to our future commercial and political relations. Independent of its internal resources, it is essentially an outlying dependency, the very last part of our domain which we can afford to neglect or leave to the control of its sparse population. This peculiar circumstance of itself renders the presence of a well-informed Delegate indispensable upon this floor.

The resources of Alaska in gold, iron, and coal are already known to be very great, if not inexhaustible. She has now the largest stamp mill in existence, and well-informed authorities believe that she will soon produce \$10,000,000 in gold annually, and ultimately become one of the greatest gold-producing regions known.

More than one hundred species of food-fish swarm in her waters. Her salmon, cod, and halibut will feed the world. The annual product of salmon is now over \$3,000,000. Her fur-bearing animals now constitute one of the chief sources of supply, and such is the nature of the country that they are not likely ever to become less important.

Some idea of her maritime extent may be derived from the fact that her coast line, including islands, is 26,364 miles in length, while that of all the rest of our country is 7,543 miles.

The population of Alaska was by the census of 1890: White, 4,298; mixed, 1,823; Indian, 23,531; Mongolian, 2,288; all others, 112; total, 32,052.

Governor Sheakley, in his report for the year 1895, estimates the white population at 8,000, of whom 1,500 are in the Yukon Valley. The white immigration is believed now to be more than 10,000, four-fifths of which is located in southeastern Alaska, the city of Juneau alone having upward of 2,000, and there is every indication of its great and continued increase, for the resources of this vast region must continue to attract capital and labor for all time.

The mixed population, generally the offspring of Russian inhabitants, who did not elect to return to their natural allegiance after the treaty of cession, and of Indian women, which was 1,823 by the census of 1890, is by the census officials reported to be rapidly diminishing in numbers, and the Indians, generally, to be not much increasing, if at all. We have, then, a population of at least 10,000 white Americans, nearly all of them citizens of the United States, and by reason of the absence of families an unusual proportion of them entitled to vote, with a prospective increase to which no limits can be placed, inhabiting and developing a region comprising one-sixth the area of the United States, stretching along and commanding the Pacific Ocean and its principal lines of commerce for all time, yet so situated that by reason of her vast extent and great difficulties of intercommunication, her lack of agricultural capabilities, which are the foundation of States, the diverse elements of her population largely such as are at present inadmissible to American citizenship, they can probably never become a State in the Union, or even be benefited by a Territorial form of government—certainly not for many years to come—a population of necessity now and hereafter to be almost wholly dependent upon Congress for legislation, without any voice or representation emanating from the people themselves in framing the laws by which they are governed.

They have not even the power to protest on the floor of Congress against gross neglect to enact important laws, imperatively required by their peculiar situation.

Some idea may be obtained of the pressing need that Alaska has of representation on this floor by comparing the business now before Congress from Alaska, much of it of a fundamental nature, relating to titles, taxation, and the preservation of property and good order and the very existence of civilized communities, with the old States and the Territories.

Take New York, for instance, with 2 Senators and 34 Representatives. The Congressional Record, of this session, thus far indicates the pendency of 15 bills, memorials, and resolutions of a local nature from that State.

Oklahoma, with her complicated affairs, has 32 pending local matters, while Alaska has 35, including not less than 15 important bills and some that have been pending Congress after Congress, because there was no responsible Delegate to give reliable information upon which to base intelligent legislation. As an instance of the actual conditions in Alaska, Governor Sheakley mentions "the city of Juneau, a mining town of 2,000 inhabitants, without any organized or local government whatever." (See report, p. 20.)

The unfortunate state of Alaska is owing less to the willful neglect of

Congress than to the lack of reliable sources of information and active representation.

In confirmation of this view we incorporate an extract from a letter of Judge Dulaney, a resident of the Territory for several years, and lately appointed judge of the United States district court of Alaska, who declares in effect that, much as it is needed, there should be no further legislation for the District until she is properly represented on the floor of the House.

ON BOARD CITY OF TOPEKA, December 7, 1895.

Concerning legislation for this Territory, I think the energies of all who feel like helping this country should be first directed to securing a Delegate. After that other things will come.

Truly, yours,

A. K. DULANEY.

We insert a table showing the white and total population of twelve of the States and of the Territory of Arizona at the census nearest the date of their organization as Territories. It will be observed that in many of them the enumeration was made several years after representation by Delegate was accorded, and it is well known that the influx of population was very rapid immediately after their organization. It is not probable that the average white population in these cases at the time of their becoming Territories, with local governments and Delegates in Congress, was over 3,000, while Alaska already has over 10,000 whites.

	Date of organization.	Population by census nearest date of organization.		
		Census.	White.	Total.
Arizona	Feb. 24, 1863	1870	9, 581	9, 658
Dakota—North and South.....	Mar. 2, 1861	1860	2, 576	4, 837
Idaho	Mar. 3, 1863	1870	10, 618	14, 999
Illinois	Feb. 3, 1809	1810	11, 501	12, 282
Indiana	May 7, 1800	1800	2, 402	2, 517
Michigan	Jan. 11, 1805	1810	4, 618	4, 762
Minnesota.....	Mar. 2, 1849	1850	6, 938	6, 977
Mississippi.....	Apr. 7, 1798	1800	4, 446	7, 600
Montana.....	May 26, 1864	1870	18, 306	20, 595
Nevada.....	Mar. 2, 1863	1860	6, 812	6, 857
Utah.....	Sept. 9, 1850	1850	11, 330	11, 380
Washington.....	Mar. 2, 1853	1860	11, 138	11, 594
Wyoming.....	July 28, 1868	1870	8, 726	9, 118
Alaska.....	{	1890	4, 298	32, 052
	{	*1896	10, 000	37, 000

* Estimated.

The people of the District of Columbia, a less important community to the country at large than Alaska, have two great committees of Congress constantly at their service and are in close contact with all departments of the Government.

Thus it appears that this great and increasing body of isolated American citizens, holding a position and possessing and representing interests not inferior to those of many of the States, local and to the nation at large, present and prospective, and who now require representation more than any other, is the only portion of our countrymen who, like aliens and wild Indians, are absolutely disfranchised in every sense.

One other feature of the condition of our fellow-citizens in Alaska has impressed itself upon us with great force. Most of their relations are direct with the General Government and the people are in constant need of a Delegate of their own choice responsible to them for the attention which their innumerable affairs require at the several Executive Departments in Washington; and not less necessary is it for the Depart-

ments that they should be in communication with someone whose duty it is to be correctly informed upon the various subjects which arise.

Accordingly, we find the passage of this bill earnestly supported by the Treasury Department, with which the larger part of the business of Alaska is transacted.

In fact, the honorable Assistant Secretary Hamlin appeared before the committee and very earnestly and conclusively demonstrated the importance of representation being allowed to Alaska on account of her extensive business with that Department, he personally having often found great difficulty in determining the proper line of action for want of some reliable informant upon whom to fix responsibility.

It only remains to explain the working provisions of the bill—a matter attended with some difficulty on account of the vast extent of territory and the widely scattered population.

It may first be observed that, the object being to give the people an opportunity to secure a capable and honest Delegate, who will, however, have no voting power, it is not necessary to raise all the delicate questions which might arise in State and national elections.

Whatever is done at the election, all the returns will be in the hands of the House, with power to seat or reject the candidate, as shall be deemed for the best interest of the whole people of Alaska; nor will the provisions of this bill necessarily be operative beyond the first election. Experience will be likely to suggest improvements.

It has been thought best to limit the right to vote in the first election to male citizens of the United States 21 years of age and upward. This rule is simple and safe. To authorize any but citizens to vote is to deprive citizens of their power. This rule will not permit the raising of doubtful questions as to the rights of women and Indians (which may well be considered later on) to perplex the officials at the several voting places, who will be performing their duties for the first time.

The census shows that practically the voters will be white American citizens, native or naturalized.

No question can arise unless in regard to those classed as "mixed Indians," not exceeding 300 or 400 voters, that whole population being 1,823 in the year 1890 and rapidly diminishing. (See Census Report, "Alaska," p. xi.)

If they are living as civilized men they may be American citizens under the terms of the treaty with Russia, dated March 30, 1867, which provides:

ART. III. The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of the uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country.

Whether these three or four hundred men (at most) shall vote or not, provided that they are not connected with the uncivilized tribes, can not materially affect the result, as there are probably five or six thousand white American citizens entitled to vote.

The governor, the judge of the district court, the clerk, and the marshal of the district, who are familiar with the treaty, the laws, the status of the inhabitants, and the whole situation are by the bill charged with the establishment of the polling places, the appointment of election boards, and the issuing of all necessary instructions for the conduct of the election.

Mr. Miner W. Bruce, who took the census of southeastern Alaska in 1890, and who is familiar with the whole coast to Point Barrow, in the Arctic Ocean, estimates the whole number of voters at points north of Unalaska at 50, and that not more than 4 polling places for them would be necessary.

Unalaska, the most important port of the Northern Pacific Ocean, and probably to be a great naval station, is 1,250 miles westerly of Sitka, the capital, which is in southeastern Alaska.

The Aleutian Islands stretch 1,000 miles beyond Unalaska toward Asia.

Mr. Bruce is of the opinion that, including Unalaska, 5 polling places only will be required between Unalaska and Sitka to accommodate, as estimated, an aggregate of 199 voters. Southeastern Alaska, including Sitka and Juneau, estimated to contain about 3,000 voters, can be accommodated at 10, while the Yukon Valley, practically including all the rest, will require but 3 or 4 polling places. Thus, probably nine-tenths of the voters of the whole District will need but 22 stations.

It would be impossible, making every conceivable allowance for increase of population (since that increase must go mainly to points already occupied), that more than 40 places can be required at the proposed election next October. The bill, however, permits the establishment of not exceeding 100, and limits the cost to \$25 each, and the total cost, in any event, to \$3,000, including the establishment of stations, fees of election boards, collection of returns, etc., all to be audited by the Treasury Department before payment. It is not probable that the entire expense to the Government can exceed \$2,000.

Any further expense must be borne by the people themselves, and as they have no laws for the levy and collection of taxes, it is but right that the United States should provide for the first election. The vast mass of pending legislation concerning Alaska, as well as the great international boundary question (all making a Delegate on this floor so necessary), is morally sure to go over to the short session next winter, when it may be hoped that it will receive consideration.

The bill therefore provides for an election of a Delegate to the short session of this as well as to the Fifty-fifth Congress, and the time is fixed for the election this year in October, although, but for the preliminary work (which will be less hereafter), September would be the better month on account of the shortness of the season.

A mail steamer leaves Unalaska for Sitka October 15, and other conveyance is such from points still more remote that all the returns can be placed in the hands of the governor early in November, which will give opportunity for the Delegate to reach Washington promptly at the opening of the next session, during which, from the postponement of legislation, his services will be of practically the same value as for a full term.

On several occasions Congress has been urged by the people of Alaska to give them representation by a Delegate on the floor of this House. Public meetings, memorials, and the general expression of her representative men, and of many others who know the situation, have prayed for her this privilege—if, indeed, it be not an inherent right—a privilege the exercise of which is as important to the country at large as to herself.

They are the only body of American citizens who have no voice whatever in the making of the laws by which they are governed, and, in view of all the preceding considerations, your committee urge the immediate passage of this bill in order that the necessary preparations may be made for an election next October.