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Fort Meade, S. Dak.

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FORT MEADE, S. DAK.

JANUARY 20, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

Mr. PETTIGREW presented the following:

**CERTAIN CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE MATTER OF THE
MAINTENANCE OF FORT MEADE, S. DAK.**

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 12, 1898.

SIR: In compliance with the request contained in your letters of 7th ultimo and 5th instant, I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of correspondence relative to the improvement and maintenance of Fort Meade, S. Dak.

Very respectfully,

G. D. MEIKLEJOHN,
Acting Secretary of War.

Hon. R. F. PETTIGREW,
United States Senate.

FORT MEADE, S. DAK., *February 16, 1897.*

SIR: I have the honor to state that it is not thought to be true economy to spend any money in repairing the most of the buildings at this post.

The buildings are in such condition that to properly repair them cost almost as much as to rebuild them, and even then they would not be convenient, comfortable, or suitable buildings.

The barracks are but one story, are small, inconvenient, and uncomfortable, have not cellars or sufficient rooms, and are light frame buildings, all pine, some of it fat pine, and would burn like kindling wood.

The prevailing winds blow directly down the line of the buildings, and it is thought that if a fire should start all buildings to the leeward of the one in which the fire started would be destroyed.

The fuel used is pine, which makes a great deal of soot, and burning soot from even a chimney burning out, dropping on a resinous shingle is likely to set fire to adjoining buildings.

A fire is more likely to occur during extreme cold weather when of course people keep their stoves going to their full capacity.

It would add to the comfort and efficiency of the troops, and it is thought would be more economical in the end for the Government to build between the present barracks, new, two-story barracks of brick

Ratio of increase of producing ability estimated by natural increase of population—by ratio of increase of aggregate of wealth as shown by the census of 1880 and 1890, and also calculated by average increase in wage volume, shows in neither case a greater ratio than an average of 4 per cent per annum.

Thus it is seen that there is a demand at 8 per cent on a debt volume almost equal to the power of production, and that demand compounding annually, while the producing ability to meet it grows only at a simple average ratio of 4 per cent. As will be seen from the above statement the annual surplus is small, but a short continuance of the progression of demand would consume it entirely.

The figures here given are from data reported by the Eleventh Census, which furnishes the first information in this direction, and, from the data given, the subject seems to be of sufficient importance to demand thorough investigation and exact results. The principle and mathematical result of this compounding demand against a lesser ratio of increase of producing ability is demonstrated in the accompanying pamphlet on pages 80-83; the detail and classification of public debts, pages 103-193. Some interesting figures as to the absorption and concentration of produced values are cited in the accompanying newspaper extract, and still further elaborated in the pamphlet in Chapter XVII, page 63. Other important facts are illustrated in Chapter XXVIII, page 118. The debt investigation by the Eleventh Census has opened a broad field, which must be thoroughly explored before we can advance from theory to exact knowledge in the domain of finance, and the proposed amendment seems in the direction of taking the first and most necessary step.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH—LANDLORDS GET ONE-HALF THE TOTAL ANNUAL PRODUCT OF THE COUNTRY—PROF. J. A. COLLINS THROWS NEW LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT—SIX AND ONE-HALF BILLION DOLLARS GO TO REAL ESTATE OWNERS AND ONE AND ONE-HALF BILLIONS TO INTEREST ON DEBTS EVERY YEAR—STARTLING FIGURES FROM CENSUS OF 1890.

[Written for the Journal.]

That the aggregate wealth of a nation is a proof of its greatness, its prosperity and progress, is a most vital and fundamental delusion, although it is universally set out without fear of contradiction by a class of political charlatans, whose profession is to fly the eagle and excite senseless enthusiasm; and a large proportion of people accept their assertions and boasts as unquestionable truths.

People are oftener misled in judging of conditions and effects of systems by this false conception than by any other.

The fact is that the aggregate wealth of a nation is no criterion by which to judge of its prosperity. A vast amount of values centralized in the hands of a few, or of a class, may exist in a nation and the mass of its population groan under the most grievous oppression, in the most abject poverty and slavery, while they wallow in the densest ignorance. Russia, Turkey, Persia—all of the great autocracies of history—are evidences of this fact.

The true prosperity of a nation or people is best indicated by the general distribution of wealth. The more general the distribution the greater the comfort, happiness, and prosperity of the people, and the greater the degree of liberty enjoyed.

Taking this standard as a guide, what is the status of our own nation in the scale of prosperity?

There is no questioning the fact that this nation is the possessor of a vast amount of accumulated values, which are evidences of the wonderful producing capacity of the industry of our people. But how are these values distributed; to what extent do the masses of the people benefit by them; what proportion do the producers retain of the values created by their industry and skill? In what degree is their labor lessened, or their comfort and advantages multiplied by them?

From the most authentic data in our possession, gathered and compiled at great expense by the Government, the following interesting and startling facts are developed.

The total wealth of the nation is estimated by the Census Bureau to aggregate \$65,037,091,197 actual value. This aggregate is classified as follows:

Real estate, with improvements thereon	\$39,544,544,333
Live stock on farms and ranges, and farm implements	2,703,015,040
Mines and quarries, including product on hand	1,291,291,579
Gold and silver, coin and bullion	1,158,774,948
Machinery of mills and products on hand, raw and manufactured..	3,058,593,441
Railroads and equipments, including street railroads	8,685,407,23
Telegraphs and telephones, shipping and canals	701,755,712
Miscellaneous	7,893,708,821
Total	65,037,091,197

Of this total of wealth it will be seen that by far the greater portion is made up of real-estate values, about 61 per cent of the whole being made up of this special class of property.

Land being the first and greatest necessity of man, the requirements for the greatest degree of prosperity would demand a general distribution of this important factor in the great economic problem. Let us see what are the actual conditions in this regard.

The data as to home ownership shows the following conditions to prevail. The total population on June 1, 1890, was 63,450,700, or about 12,690,152 families of 5 members each, or an aggregate of that many homes, both owned and rented. Out of the total number of families the number owning and occupying mortgaged homes and farms is about 2,250,000, leaving 10,440,152 families occupying hired homes and farms, or those which they own free of incumbrance; about 8,250,000 families occupy hired homes and farms, leaving 2,190,152 who occupy their homes free of incumbrance.

This shows that about 66 per cent of the people are actually tenants, and consequently can have no share in real estate values, but real estate represents for them a burden in the shape of rent. It will be observed that 18 per cent occupy mortgaged homes and farms. Now, the holder of a mortgaged home is virtually but a tenant holding under the superior right of the mortgagee and paying an annual tribute equivalent to rent.

A very great portion of lands so held are forfeited, and the holders become actual tenants. Adding the mortgaged homes and farms to the percentage of tenants, we have 74 per cent of the population cut off from any share in this class of values, leaving the entire aggregate of land values in the hands of 26 per cent of the population. But included in this class of owners are those who own no more than the homes they occupy free of encumbrance. The class of free-home owners is about 16 per cent of the population, and in this is included the landlord class. Deducting from the 26 per cent the class who own no

Fort Robinson has ample and, on the whole, satisfactory accommodations for even more than the troops now at the post. The outlay on account of buildings there for several years to come will probably be small and confined to ordinary repairs.

On the other hand, the condition of all but comparatively few of the buildings at Fort Meade is bad, and growing rapidly worse. If it is to be kept up it must soon be rebuilt. Besides the accessibility of its garrison to any part of the country, there are several reasons why I think it should be looked upon and provided for as one of the more permanent of Western posts. The site is well adapted for a cavalry command and the climate is exceptionally salubrious. The sick rate of the garrison is the lowest of all of the posts in the department garrisoned by white troops. Its situation with reference to the five Sioux Indian agencies; its close proximity to a region having extensive mining industries, and therefore liable to labor disturbances; the fact that it is the only post in, and is highly valued by, a new and sparsely settled State, are factors which appear to me to be decisive in favor of its maintenance for an indefinite period.

J. J. COPPINGER,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

* * * * *

[Ninth indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, March 29, 1897.

Respectfully submitted to the honorable the Secretary of War, concurring with the commanding general, Department of the Platte, in the seventh indorsement hereon, and recommending that \$100,000 be provided to place Fort Meade in good condition, as there is no prospect of its being proper to abandon it. One-third of this sum can be allotted each year until the work is completed, unless a special appropriation for the purpose can be obtained.

NELSON A. MILES,
Major-General, Commanding.

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[Tenth indorsement.]

QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., April 5, 1897.

Respectfully returned to the honorable the Secretary of War.

The remarks of the department commander, Department of the Platte, and the major-general commanding the Army, hereon, indicate the probability that Fort Meade may eventually be selected as one of the more permanent Western posts.

The post will now accommodate a regiment of cavalry. There are 10 barracks, 1 band barrack, 25 sets of officers' quarters, and other buildings necessary for the accommodation of a large garrison—a total of about 70 buildings.

These buildings are bad, and no doubt fast becoming so much worse that it will be difficult to hold the post together much longer with the annual allotment for repairs—about \$4,000.

But to rebuild it with brick buildings of modern construction and improvements would cost from \$600,000 to \$700,000. One hundred thousand dollars suggested would not rebuild the barracks alone.

The failure of a bill in the Fifty-fourth Congress to appropriate

\$100,000 for the construction of permanent buildings at Fort Meade would discourage an allotment for the purpose stated from moneys appropriated upon estimates of the War Department which did not contemplate the Fort Meade improvements.

No doubt the construction of a more modern and permanent post in the section of country covered by Forts Robinson, Niobrara, and Meade must shortly receive consideration, but it must be understood that it will involve the expenditure of a large sum of money, to which the War Department should not commit itself except upon careful determination of the proper location of the post, its plan, cost, etc., and an appropriation sufficiently large to warrant the undertaking.

GEO. H. WEEKS,
Quartermaster-General, U. S. A.

[Eleventh indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, *April 8, 1897.*

The views of the Quartermaster-General are concurred in.

R. A. ALGER,
Secretary of War.

* * * * *

[Fourteenth indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, May 4, 1897.

Respectfully returned to the honorable the Secretary of War, inviting attention to the following:

The strategic importance of Fort Meade is that it is directly north of the great Sioux Nation, a large reservation of the Sioux or Dakota Indians, embracing what was formerly known as the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies, but now known as the Pine Ridge and Rosebud agencies.

The importance of this large cavalry station is to protect the settlers in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana in case of an uprising among the Sioux Indians; and as the post and department commanders have recommended the repair of the buildings at this post, it should, in my opinion, be considered one of the permanent military establishments, and what funds can be spared used in keeping the buildings in order.

NELSON A. MILES,
Major-General Commanding.

[Fifteenth indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,
QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., May 13, 1897.

Respectfully returned to the honorable the Secretary of War.

Referring to the tenth indorsement hereon, the Secretary of War has already allotted between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to keep Fort Meade in repair during the coming fiscal year. In the opinion of the Quartermaster-General this is the best policy to pursue with reference to posts whose permanency is in doubt. Ten years may change the whole problem in Nebraska and the Dakotas.

As to temporary posts, no more should be constructed; and those

which have passed their usefulness should be abandoned. Such of them as are needed for the present should be kept in repair by annual allotments.

But, concerning permanent posts in this section, there is no haste, but great care is necessary, if expense be any consideration, that there shall be no mistake made as to location.

GEO. H. WEEKS,
Quartermaster-General, U. S. A.

SOME REASONS WHY FORT MEADE SHOULD BE MADE A PERMANENT POST.

I.

Fort Meade is the only military post in the State of South Dakota. It was selected by Gen. Phil. Sheridan, one of the ablest of cavalry officers, and by him pronounced to be the best strategic point for a military post in the entire Northwestern Territory.

He declared the location to be ideal for cavalry, and recommended to the Government that it be made a permanent post.

II.

Fort Meade is situated at the doorway of the Black Hills of South Dakota, which are in an isolated part of the State and country, and are entirely without State troops. Its location is in the healthiest part of the Northwestern States, proof of which is found in the report of the Government inspector, showing the excellent health of the troops; that of the Government veterinarian surgeon as to the fine condition of the horses there, it being remarked that horses brought from the East and South to this altitude soon develop greater powers of endurance and stronger lung power. As a basis for military movements this post occupies the best point in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Wyoming, or Montana, being centrally located with relation to all the Western Indian reservations, and in case of Indian hostilities troops from Fort Meade can quickly reach any point of trouble in any of the five States named. The white population of the territory surrounded by these Indian reservations is about 30,000, as against 40,000 Indians on the reservations in question. The Northwestern Railway passes through Sturgis, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Fort Meade, and connects with the Burlington and Missouri Railway at Deadwood, 13 miles distant.

III.

Fuel, grain, hay, and provisions, and all other military supplies can be procured cheaper in the vicinity of this post than in most other parts of the country. The source of water supply to the fort is in the mountains and beyond the possibility of future contamination. It is inexhaustible in quantity and of purest quality. In support of its purity attention is invited to the official analysis of the analytical chemist of the Surgeon-General at Washington, Dr. Mew, who concludes by saying: "It is of exceptional purity, and it is not too much to

say that a community supplied with such water is in the possession of a blessing." (A copy of said official analysis of this water is hereto annexed, marked Exhibit A.)

IV.

The State of South Dakota has within its borders 25 per cent of all the uncivilized Indians in the United States, there being from 20,000 to 25,000 in South Dakota alone; and these Indians are probably the least civilized and the most restive and troublesome of the Government's wards, and it may be added that their numbers have not diminished since the battle of Wounded Knee.

V.

The Indian troubles in recent years have shown that the South Dakota Indians make frequent visits to the Indians in Montana, to indulge in their dances and have their Indian councils, which generally precede trouble; that the trail traveled by them in making these periodical visits lies between Fort Meade and the north line of South Dakota, through a country fairly populated, and the presence of troops at Fort Meade is very necessary to the exercise of proper surveillance over these Indians while on the trail, thus preventing depredations and perhaps more serious trouble.

VI.

The isolated settlements of stockmen and their families in western South Dakota, eastern Wyoming and Montana, and their extensive cattle ranges bordering on the several Indian reservations, make it almost imperative that there be a permanent military post with abundant troops in just such a location as we find Fort Meade. The recent rounding up of 3,000 head of these cattle by the Sioux Indians, who demanded \$1 per head for their ransom, lends strong emphasis to this statement. Again, troops at this point should be maintained by reason of the numerous United States mail routes in western South Dakota.

VII.

In conclusion, it may be added that, according to well-known Indian legends, the red man of the Northwest, and especially the Sioux tribes, have always regarded, and still regard, the Black Hills with marked supernatural awe, believing that in some portion of them is the abiding place of the Great Spirit. The wonderful curative powers of the Hot Springs in these hills, and the forests, still teeming with deer and other game, notwithstanding the advent of the hated white man; these, to the simple Indian mind, are proof of the truth of their belief, that here dwells their Deity. It was only after a most desperate struggle that they were compelled to relinquish this ground as a part of their reservation, and they still long to regain it. Would it, then, be safe to remove the protection that Fort Meade affords to the people of these hills? Certainly it is but natural to suppose that at the first outbreak of trouble they would attempt to regain what they still regard as their sacred heritage, perpetrating, if necessary, upon the present inhabitants a second Custer massacre.

EX BIT A.

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 13, 1892.

MY DEAR SIR: I send herewith my report on the water samples you sent me, the results being given in tabular form below. An inspection of this table shows the water in both samples to be entirely free from organic matter. In "A" the mineral matter is in excess, which renders it unfit for domestic uses. In "B" it is very much less and within the limits required. It is not too much to say that the sample is of exceptional purity, and a community supplied with it would be in possession of a blessing.

In the table the water in the one bottle is called "A," that in the other three bottles "B."

The results are stated in parts per 100,000 parts.

B.

Nitrates	None.
Nitrites	None.
Chlorine	0.5
Free ammonia	0.00025
Albuminoid ammonia	None.
Oxygen required	None.
Total solids	29

B.—HARDNESS.

Temporary	25
Permanent	15

Very truly, yours,

H. M. MEW, *Analytic Chemist.*

NOTE.—The analysis of "A" is not given above, as it was creek water and with no particular bearing upon this matter.

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