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Congress of the Indian tribes of the United States.

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CONGRESS OF THE INDIAN TRIBES OF THE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 13, 1897.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 2507.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2507) "to provide for the holding of a congress of the Indian tribes of the United States at the city of Omaha, in the State of Nebraska, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, and for other purposes," beg leave to report the same favorably, with the following proposed amendments:

After the word "tribes," in line 8, page 1, insert the following:

as a part of the Transmississippi and International Exposition, to be held at the city of Omaha, in the State of Nebraska, pursuant to an act of Congress entitled "An act to authorize and encourage the holding of a Transmississippi and International Exposition at the city of Omaha, in the State of Nebraska, in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-eight," approved June tenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-six."

Amend line 11, page 1, by striking out the words "every tribe" and inserting in lieu thereof the words "different Indian tribes."

In line 18, page 2, strike out the words "one hundred" and insert in lieu thereof the word "fifty."

Congress, by the act of June 10, 1896, entitled "An act to authorize and encourage the holding of a Transmississippi and International Exposition at the city of Omaha, in the State of Nebraska, in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-eight," appropriated \$200,000, \$50,000 of which was to be used in the construction of a building and \$150,000 for the purpose of making an exhibit at the exposition to be held in Omaha, Nebr., in 1898. The entire sum of money required by that act has been raised, and many thousand dollars besides, the grounds have been selected, many of the buildings have been constructed, and many others are in process of construction, and the exposition bids fair to be the largest to which Congress has in any manner contributed since the Columbian Exposition of 1893.

There has never been, so far as your committee is informed, a thorough Indian exhibit at any exposition held in the United States, and we deem it wise and proper that it should be done at this one. The Indians, and therefore their customs and habits, are rapidly passing away, and it is believed this exposition will be the first, and probably the last, opportu-

nity the people of the United States will have to see the aborigines in their various stages of development and observe their habits and customs and the advancement they have made toward civilization under our present system of education.

The desirability for the passage of this bill is put very forcibly by Maj. J. W. Powell, of the Bureau of Ethnology, in the subjoined letter, in which he says, among other things:

I am of the opinion that groups of Indians from selected tribes of the United States could be made very attractive and instructive by installing them in domiciles of their own construction made of materials of their own collection. The structures themselves would be a novel feature and exhibit the deftness with which they protect themselves from the inclemency of the weather. If, then, they were induced to bring the materials necessary for carrying on their primitive arts and engage in the making of articles for sale on the ground, the arts themselves would be of great interest. Living on the ground, they would necessarily engage in their games and ceremonial institutions, and the exhibition of Indian life thus produced would be of supreme interest.

By such means the arts and institutions of savage life would be vividly portrayed to a large body of the people of the United States, who would thus be able to understand more clearly the nature and characteristics of savagery and the problem which is presented to the Indian Department in the endeavor to lift the aboriginal inhabitants of the country into the status of civilization. The General Government from its organization more than a century ago has been steadily attempting to accomplish this purpose, in which it has expended more than \$300,000,000, and in lieu of these efforts it has by treaty stipulation purchased the hunting grounds of the tribes, leaving in their possession small tracts of land as reservations, which they are gradually inducing the tribesmen to take in severalty. The great body of the people necessarily have a very imperfect idea of the nature of the task which has been imposed by law upon the Indian Department. Such an exhibition would be of inestimable value.

Your committee attach also, as a part of this report, letters from the Secretary of the Interior; Major Powell; Mr. Herbert Welsh, secretary of the Indian Rights Association of the United States; Hon. W. A. Jones, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and a letter of Senator Allen, addressed to the Secretary of the Interior.

Your committee recommends the passage of the bill with the amendments proposed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 4, 1897.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 3d instant was duly received. This Department will cheerfully cooperate in any well-devised plan that may be adopted to carry out the scheme for providing an Indian exhibit, as suggested by you, at the Transmississippi and International Exposition. It should, however, be understood by the friends of the plan that to provide such an exhibition will involve a very large expense, and will require a special appropriation by Congress, as the share of the present appropriation assigned to the Department of the Interior is only \$18,500, a sum barely sufficient for the ordinary exhibition already authorized.

I will refer your letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for his opinion regarding the practicability of securing the cooperation of the Indians and for an estimate of the probable expense involved, and will advise you further regarding the matter at an early date.

Yours, truly,

C. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

HON. WILLIAM V. ALLEN,
United States Senate.

COMMITTEE ON FOREST RESERVATIONS AND THE PRESERVATION OF GAME,
UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, D. C., December 5, 1897.

SIR: You are already aware that the managers of the Transmississippi and International Exposition are desirous that their great enterprise shall be made the occa-

sion of an extensive exhibit by the Government illustrative of the life, native industries, and ethnic traits of as many of the aboriginal American tribes as possible. To this end it is proposed that selected families or groups from the principal tribes be brought together under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and camped in tepees, wigwams, or hogans on the exposition grounds, and be permitted and encouraged to make and sell their wares for their own profit, and conduct their domestic affairs as they do at home. I have prepared a bill, to be introduced at once, providing the means for this undertaking, which meets my heartiest approval. I need not argue the entertaining and instructive nature of a display of this character—instructive as well to the thousands of American citizens and foreigners who will visit Omaha next summer as to the Indians who shall participate—nor the eminent suitability of the occasion and the place for the purpose.

Our Indian tribes are rapidly passing away, and promise, before another occasion so favorable shall offer, to have so far modified their habits and industries, by the adoption of these of civilization, as to forget, to a large extent, their own original methods of life.

Foreign Governments which have held or promoted great world's fairs in recent years—notably France and Belgium—have made these the occasion of bringing from their remotest colonies and dependencies families, groups, and even whole villages of aborigines, and have found their profit in the educational advantages which strange people mutually afford when brought into contact.

Within the borders of our land live many tribes, whose quaint habits and methods of life have remained unchanged since the days of Columbus, and whose characteristics are less known, even to our own people, than those of the tribes of Central Africa and Asia, and these people are sufferers, in many respects, by reason of their ignorance of our people.

I beg to suggest that you give me your views and those prevailing among the expert authorities of your department as to the practicability and desirability of the project outlined, and that you favor me at an early day with anything you may be pleased to say on the subject-matter.

I have the honor to be, very truly, yours,

WM. V. ALLEN.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, December 4, 1897.

DEAR SIR: In response to your letter of the 3d instant, I beg to make the following reply:

I am of the opinion that groups of Indians from selected tribes of the United States could be made very attractive and instructive by installing them in domiciles of their own construction made of the materials of their own collection. The structures themselves would be a novel feature and exhibit the deftness with which they protect themselves from the inclemency of the weather. If, then, they were induced to bring the materials necessary for carrying on their primitive arts and engage in the making of articles for sale on the ground, the arts themselves would be of great interest. Living on the ground, they would necessarily engage in their games and ceremonial institutions, and the exhibition of Indian life thus produced would be of supreme interest.

By such means the arts and institutions of savage life would be vividly portrayed to a large body of the people of the United States, who would thus be able to understand more clearly the nature and characteristics of savagery and the problem which is presented to the Indian Department in the endeavor to lift the aboriginal inhabitants of the country into the status of civilization. The General Government, from its organization more than a century ago, has been steadily attempting to accomplish this purpose, in which it has expended more than \$300,000,000, and in lieu of these efforts it has by treaty stipulations purchased the hunting grounds of the tribes, leaving in their possession small tracts of land as reservations, which it is gradually inducing the tribesmen to take in severalty. The great body of the people necessarily have a very imperfect idea of the nature of the task which has been imposed by law upon the Indian Department. Such an exhibition would be of inestimable value.

I am, with great respect, yours, cordially,

J. W. POWELL.

Hon. WILLIAM V. ALLEN,
*Chairman, Committee on Forest Reservations and the Protection of Game,
United States Senate.*

INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION,
Philadelphia, December 3, 1897.

MY DEAR SIR: Your favor of December 2, with inclosures relative to your proposition that a congress of the Indian tribes of the United States should be held next year at Omaha, in connection with the Transmississippi and International Exposition, has just reached me. I heartily approve what I take to be the spirit and purpose of this measure, and I quite agree with you in thinking, if carried out under direction of the Secretary of the Interior and with judicious safeguards, that it will prove of great importance "in illustrating the progress the Indians have made and are making under the present system of education and civilization."

I believe your project deserves high commendation and strong support. I trust that it will receive both, and that it will be carried into practical operation. As I understand it, there would be presented to popular observation the striking contrast between the original savage condition of the Indian, under which he is so unfit for contact with civilization, and the present state of moral, mental, and, so far as civilized requirements are concerned, physical development, to which the rising generation of the Indian race is now being brought by the generous education which the Government affords, and in which missionary and philanthropic bodies have aided. There is no better means of reaching the popular mind, and touching the warm and true instincts of the American heart than by such an object lesson as this. It is because the better class of our people have so long remained in ignorance of the possibilities of Indian education and civilization, and of the wrongs which have been inflicted upon the Indian race, that these people have been in so many instances the prey of designing, avaricious, or ignorant men. During the last twenty-five years remarkable progress has been made in the work of Indian civilization and in raising the standard of our national treatment of the red men. Such a project as that which you have kindly brought to my attention it seems to me would reveal these changed and hopeful conditions with the clearness and vividness of a panoramic picture. What the Indian is in his natural state, and what he may become through intelligent guidance and care, would be shown at a glance to the thousands who would visit this exposition. In no way could prejudice more quickly be disarmed, mistaken notions be corrected, or a fuller sentiment than now supports the measures of the Government for the education and protection of the Indian be secured.

Of course such a project would have to be carefully guarded from the designs of persons who might be disposed to divert it to personal schemes of money making or notoriety, but that danger, which is always a real one in connection with great projects, would no doubt be amply guarded against by the Secretary of the Interior and his assistants, to whom the execution of the plan would be intrusted. Regarding the details of your bill, you are better fitted to determine than I am. I will only suggest that the Washington agent of our association, Mr. Francis E. Leupp, might call on you to confer on this subject. If he can lend you any aid, I am sure he will gladly do so. I write in my individual capacity, and not officially as secretary of the Indian Rights Association, but I think I am safe in declaring that the opinions which I now express on this subject will be entertained by every member of our executive committee and by the members of our society. Personally, I most sincerely commend your project, under the qualifications specified, and I wish it the fullest success. Believe me,

Very sincerely, yours,

HERBERT WELSH.

HON. WILLIAM V. ALLEN,
Senate Chamber, Washington, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, December 9, 1897.

SIR: I am in receipt, by your reference on the 7th instant, for immediate consideration, report, and recommendation, of a communication dated December 3, 1897, from Senator William V. Allen, stating that the managers of the "Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition" (to be held at Omaha, Nebr., the coming summer) are desirous that the Government should make an extensive exhibit illustrative of the life, native industries, and ethnic traits of as many of the aboriginal American tribes as possible, to which end, he says, it is proposed that selected families or groups from the principal tribes be brought together under the auspices of the Indian Bureau, and camped in tepees, wigwams, and hogans, on the exposition grounds, and permitted to make and sell their wares for their own profit, and conduct their domestic affairs as they do at home.

Senator Allen thinks such an exhibit will prove instructive and beneficial, not only to those who visit the fair, but to the Indians who participate. He suggests

that our Indian tribes are rapidly passing away, and are modifying their original habits and industries by adopting those of civilization, and says that foreign Governments which have held or promoted such fairs in recent years have made them the occasion for bringing families, groups, and even whole villages of aborigines from their remotest colonies, and that the resulting educational advantages were found to be mutually profitable.

The Senator says there are within our borders many tribes whose quaint habits and methods of life have remained unchanged since the days of Columbus, and whose characteristics are little known even to our own people.

He further says he has prepared a bill, to be introduced at once, the purpose of which is to provide the means for the undertaking, and he asks this Department for its views as to the practicability and desirability of the project outlined.

Concerning this subject I have the honor to state that the Indian Office heartily concurs in the general plan for an exhibition of Indians at the exposition to be held at Omaha next summer, believing that with proper management it will be entertaining and instructive, not only to the visitors, but to the Indians as well, and all I can say at this time is that this office will do anything in its power to promote the enterprise and make it a success.

It seems to me that if Congress makes the appropriation asked for by Senator Allen, which, I understand, is \$100,000, there will be no difficulty in bringing together representatives of all the principal tribes as well as representatives of some of the lesser tribes or bands whose characteristics are such that their presence would add as much interest.

It is not stated in the Senator's letter how many Indians are desired for the encampment, but I have heard it suggested that about 600 would be wanted.

I am of the opinion that the entire management of the Indian encampment on the part of the Department should be put in the hands of an experienced officer of this Department, or of an Army officer detailed for that special duty, to act under the orders of this office. The selection of such officer should be made with special reference to his qualifications for the work to be performed. He should not only have executive capacity, but, if possible, should have a thorough general knowledge of the native customs and characteristics of our Indians.

Such officer should be charged with the matter of the transportation of the Indians to and from the exhibition, their care and conduct during the encampment, supplying them with rations, selecting and laying out the camp, etc. He should also disburse the funds appropriated by Congress for the purpose. All this should, of course, be done under the Exposition management or in accordance with such arrangements as might be agreed upon.

As a preliminary step, and in anticipation of the required appropriation by Congress, it is suggested that this office and the Department should have the opportunity to confer with some one in authority in connection with the proposed exposition. The office could then communicate with the Indian agents in charge of the Indians to be represented at the Exposition and give them proper instructions in the matter of preparing for the encampment. I deem it advisable to do this without too much delay, in order that the Indians may have ample time to prepare for the fair and thus be enabled to make the best possible showing.

I return Senator Allen's letter herewith, and inclose a copy of this report.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. C. TONNER,
Acting Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

