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Fort Meade, S. Dak.

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FORT MEADE, S. DAK.

FEBRUARY 7, 1898.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. HAWLEY, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 1589.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, having had under consideration Senate bill No. 1589, beg leave to report the same favorably, with the recommendation that it do pass.

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.

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, and that of the Government veterinary 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, 1½ miles from Fort Meade, and connects with the Burlington and Missouri Railway at Deadwood, 13 miles distant.

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.)

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.

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. 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.

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

EXHIBIT 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.