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Military post near Sheridan, Wyo.

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MILITARY POST NEAR SHERIDAN, WYO.

JANUARY 30, 1899.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 5223.]

The committee to whom was referred the bill (S. 5223) for the establishment and erection of a military post near the city of Sheridan, Wyo., have carefully considered the same and beg leave to report it back with an amendment, and recommend that as amended it do pass.

Amend by adding at the end of bill the following: "at a cost not exceeding three hundred and sixty thousand dollars."

The proposed post is for a location in the midst of an Indian country, with reservations surrounding on all sides. It is near the trails where the Indians cross and recross when visiting different tribes, as well as when on the war path. Several posts have been abandoned near this locality within the past few years—the last one, Fort Custer, because it was unsanitary in condition—and therefore this locality is in a peculiarly exposed condition.

The Burlington Railroad having lately built through northwest to a junction with the Northern Pacific at Billings, Mont., makes it practicable and easy to move troops from here northwest, northeast, or southwest. The Burlington has now no military post on its long northwestern line of road.

The site proposed at the foot of the Big Horn range of mountains has every requisite for an ideal military post, good service, economical maintenance, best sanitary conditions, accessibility, exceptional drill and target grounds, and pleasant surroundings for rank and file, all being considered.

The location will be on the public domain, on land already withdrawn from settlement by order of the President for this purpose, and hence there will be no expense for a site.

The establishment of this post has been recommended by the commander of the Department of Colorado and the Department of the Platte; also by the Commanding General of the Army and by the Secretary of War.

Your committee append papers bearing upon the case.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, January 17, 1899.

SIR: I have the honor to return herewith the bill (S. 5223, Fifty-fifth Congress, third session) "Providing for the establishment and erection of a military post near the city of Sheridan, in the State of Wyoming," etc., and having examined the same, I recommend it to the favorable consideration of the Congress.

Very respectfully,

NELSON A. MILES,
Major-General Commanding.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

[Second indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, January 17, 1899.

Respectfully returned to Hon. Joseph R. Hawley, chairman Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate, inviting attention to the inclosed report of the Major-General Commanding and the accompanying copy of report and memorandum from Brigadier-General Sumner; also copies of other correspondence bearing on the subject.

The views expressed by the Major-General Commanding are concurred in by the Department.

G. D. MEIKLEJOHN,
Assistant Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLORADO,
Denver, Colo., October 31, 1898.

SIR: Referring to indorsement from your office, dated October 10, 1898, signed Schwan, assistant adjutant-general, directing me to investigate and report upon the matter of establishing a force at or near the town of Sheridan, Wyo., I have the honor to submit the following report:

The abandonment of all the military posts in the Northwest on the call for war with Spain left the country, once so strictly guarded, practically in the hands of the Indians, and the scattered settlements of the citizens at their mercy. Fortunately the Indians have had no cause or desire to make trouble, nor have any depredations been committed by them; but it should be understood that under the present conditions the continuance of this state of peace and quiet rests at this time entirely with the Indians, as they have nothing to fear from the military power of the Government. As regards this particular section of country to which these papers refer, I find the statements made by General Manderson and others, setting forth the immediate necessity for troops in the vicinity of the Crow and Cheyenne reservations for the protection of the citizens of that section of country, is a fair exhibit of the present state of affairs, and in my opinion are not overdrawn.

The Crow Indians are probably susceptible of control by their agent and his police, but the Cheyenne never have been controlled by the Government unless in the face of a superior force, and the time is approaching for them to make another exhibition of their warlike inclinations. As an indication of this they refused to send or allow any of their men to attend the congress at Omaha, where nearly all the other tribes were represented, giving as a reason that they feared their men would not be allowed to return. Then the agent, Mr. Clifford, who met me at Sheridan, informed me that he had some very unruly characters to deal with and that, in his opinion, there should be a force stationed within call, preferably south of the reservation, because if any trouble occurred the citizens south of the reservation would be the first to suffer, and the trail would lead either toward Powder River or to the Big Horn Mountains.

I deem it proper, therefore, to state that in order to make an intelligent report under my instructions I visited the town of Sheridan, Wyo. I believe that a force of not less than two troops of cavalry should be sent to that vicinity at once, and that one of the troops should visit both the Crow and Cheyenne agencies before the severe weather of winter comes.

I recommend the town of Sheridan as the place for a temporary camp, because at this short notice every facility exists to make the command comfortable for the winter.

This is as far as I am called upon to report, and reaches the limit of the papers accompanying my instructions; but while at Sheridan I looked over the ground with a view to the establishment of a permanent military post, and in this connection I have collected information which may be of some use in the future. I have already stated that as a military necessity a force must be kept in that country to protect the lives and property of citizens and to control and govern the Indians. Just where to estab-

lish that force in permanent barracks is a matter for serious consideration and much further investigation than I have been able to give it. Protection sufficient to cover a large extent of country is to be considered, and some point should be selected to meet that demand, but where all conditions are equal in this respect I believe economy to the Government, as well as comfort and happiness of the officers and enlisted men, should not be ignored.

At the present time the town of Sheridan seems to possess every facility demanded by all conditions. There are near the town many sections of Government land and several sites available for a post of any size. The water is in abundance and perfectly pure, flowing, as it does, directly from the snow banks of the Big Horn range of mountains, fine grazing for any number of animals, the cattle from this section always bringing the highest price in the market, an unlimited supply of a fair quality of coal in the immediate vicinity, which can be supplied to the Government at the rate of \$1 per ton delivered. Forage can be supplied at moderate rates; hay, alfalfa, \$2.50 per ton in the stack; timothy and native hay, \$6 per ton; oats, 80 cents per 100 pounds; barley, 90 cents per 100 pounds. Railroad and telegraph communication with the outside world is complete, and the Burlington road will build a spur to any site selected near the town without cost to the Government.

Among the papers forwarded with this report is one concerning the water supply, a resolution of the city council, also several photographs which give a correct idea of the source and volume of water, and also a paper showing the approximate cost of buildings necessary to shelter two troops—except stables for cavalry horses, which would require an additional sum of \$1,000.

In the Department of the Missouri two troops, First Cavalry, can be spared from Fort Riley, Kans., or in the Department of the Colorado one troop, Ninth Cavalry, can be spared from Fort Huachuca and one from Fort Grant. The detail from the First Cavalry would be much less expensive, and I believe the best.

Very respectfully,

E. V. SUMNER,

Brigadier-General, U. S. Volunteers, Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
War Department, Washington, D. C.

[Senate Document No. 71, Fifty-fifth Congress, third session.]

OMAHA, NEBR., *January 17, 1899.*

To the honorable the Senate of the United States and the Committee on Military Affairs:

On January 13, 1899, Senator Warren, of Wyoming, introduced bill S. 5223, providing for the establishment and erection of a military post near the city of Sheridan, in the State of Wyoming, and making an appropriation therefor.

The bill provides that the Secretary of War is directed to establish a military post near the city of Sheridan, Wyo., at some suitable site to be selected by the Major-General Commanding the Army and approved by the Secretary of War. The post is to be established on lands that belong to the United States and are a part of the public domain, the extent of the reservation therefor to be not less than 640 acres nor more than 2,000 acres. The bill provides for an appropriation of \$100,000, to be expended in the work of constructing the necessary buildings, grounds, barracks, and stables.

On behalf of the citizens of Wyoming and the adjacent States I desire to call the attention of the Committee on Military Affairs and the Senate to the necessity that exists for the speedy erection and completion of this post. A reference to the map hereto attached, marked Exhibit A, will show the position of the town of Sheridan, in northern Wyoming. It is the most prominent and important town on the line of the Burlington system of railroads northwest of the State of Nebraska. The map referred to shows the location of the different Indian reservations in the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. Sheridan is situate almost in the exact center of these extensive Indian reservations. They are as follows:

In North Dakota, the Fort Berthold, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, Rosebud, and Pine Ridge Indian reservations.

In the State of Montana, the Blackfeet, Flathead, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, the Crow, and Northern Cheyenne Indian reservations.

In Wyoming, the Shoshone Indian Reservation.

In Idaho, the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

In Utah, the Uintah and Uncompahgre Ute Indian reservations.

The following table shows the reservations of those named that are within easy reach of Sheridan, and I also give the number of Indians on each of said reservations, taken from the reports of the Indian Office:

Crow Indians	2, 139
Northern Cheyennes	1, 330
Shoshones	1, 687
Pine Ridge Sioux	6, 386
Rosebud Sioux	4, 381
Lower Brules	940
Cheyenne River Indians	2, 550
Standing Rock Indians	3, 720

Making a total of 23,133 Indians living on the reservations named. If to these should be added the Indians on the other reservations named, the number would approach 40,000. There has been a continuous abandonment of posts in the section of the country mentioned, the last post abandoned being Fort Custer, which was situate on the Big Horn River in the Crow Indian Reservation. This post was abandoned, not because there was no military reason for its maintenance, but because the sanitary conditions at that post were such that the health and lives of the soldiers quartered there were endangered. The situation in that section has been such as to cause very great alarm, not only to the settlers, who comprise agriculturists, stockmen, miners, and the residents of numerous towns, and not only to the railroads that take their course through the territory mentioned, but the military authorities and all have felt that there was absolute necessity for the establishment of a post in that vicinity and the maintenance of troops there. This is evidenced by the following extract from the Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the year 1898:

"Upon the recommendation of this Department certain public lands situate near Sheridan, Sheridan County, Wyo., have been reserved by Executive order for the purpose of a military reservation, it being the intention of the Department to ask an appropriation by Congress to establish there a military post."

Prior to the making of this report by the Secretary of War a thorough investigation was made under the direction of the War Department. Gen. E. V. Sumner, commanding the departments of the Colorado and of the Missouri, was directed by the War Department to investigate and report upon the matter of establishing a force at or near the town of Sheridan, Wyo.

Following this report of General Sumner to the Adjutant-General of the Army will be found upon the files of the War Department the following communication, dated November 14, 1898:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLORADO,
Denver, Colo., November 14, 1898.

SIR: Referring to my report on papers sent to me from your office relative to the necessity for troops in northern Wyoming, I respectfully urge that action be taken in this matter without delay. If it is not deemed advisable at this time to send troops as far north as Sheridan, I respectfully recommend, as a matter of protection to the citizens of all that region of country and to prevent any small band of Indians leaving their reservations to commit depredations, and to be better prepared for such an event, should it occur, that the headquarters and four troops of the First Cavalry be sent from Fort Riley to Fort Robinson, Nebr., thus putting a force in comfortable quarters and on the railroad where it can be available in case of necessity.

Very respectfully,

E. V. SUMNER,
Brigadier-General, United States Volunteers, Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
War Department, Washington, D. C.

The demand for troops elsewhere was such that it was impossible to comply with this recommendation of General Sumner, and the condition referred to by him of complete unpreparedness to all that section to resist an Indian outbreak still continues.

On the request of the War Department, numerous pieces of land suitable for garrison purposes were withdrawn from entry and settlement and are held for post purposes, so that the United States will be at no expense whatever in procuring lands exceedingly well adapted to the purposes of a military reservation.

General Sumner in his report refers to a proposition made by the town of Sheridan to furnish all water that may be needed for garrison purposes free of charge to the Government. Since his report was made the board of trustees of the town of Sheri-

dan have passed the following ordinance that has been approved by the mayor of the town and is now a law :

[ORDINANCE No. 52.]

AN ORDINANCE granting and giving the free use of water from the city water supply to the War Department of the United States.

Be it ordained by the board of trustees of the town of Sheridan :

SECTION 1. That the town of Sheridan will furnish from the city water system, free of charge, to the War Department of the United States all water necessary for domestic purposes for all troops that may be stationed within five miles of said town of Sheridan, and all water that may be needed in the construction of a military post or garrison that may be constructed within five miles of said town; and said water shall be furnished as long as said military post or garrison shall be maintained.

SEC. 2. *Provided*, That the War Department of the United States may tap either the main line or the reservoir of said system at any point.

SEC. 3. *And it is further provided*, That said tapping or connecting with said system shall be done under the supervision of the water commissioner of said town, and subject to the approval of the council of said town.

SEC. 4. *Provided*, That the pipe used by said War Department for conducting water from said system to said military post or garrison shall not be larger than six inches in diameter.

SEC. 5. *Provided*, That all work and material necessary in laying said line shall be furnished by said War Department.

SEC. 6. *Provided*, That the water hereby freely given by the town of Sheridan for the uses and purposes in this ordinance mentioned shall be used subject to all rules, regulations, and ordinances laid down, passed, or adopted by the council or trustees of said town of Sheridan, or that may hereafter be passed by said council or trustees, governing the use of said city water.

SEC. 7. An emergency exists, and it is so declared, therefore this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and adoption.

Passed November 15, 1898.

HERBERT W. TYLER, *Town Clerk*.

Approved November 15, 1898.

H. C. ALGER, *Mayor*.

The necessity for a post at this place has been recognized by the War Department in that it has made an allotment from the general appropriation for army posts of \$15,000, that temporary barracks may be erected to house and quarter troops temporarily until the permanent garrison can be placed.

General Sumner, in his report of October 31, 1898, refers to a statement made by the writer and others, setting forth the immediate necessity for troops in the vicinity of the Crow and Cheyenne reservations for the protection of the citizens of that section of country, and says that these statements are a fair exhibit of the present state of affairs, and in his opinion they are not overdrawn. The writer, who has lived for nearly thirty years west of the Missouri River, has had intimate knowledge of the conditions existing in that part of the West, and his interest in the subject, growing originally out of service on the Military and Indian Affairs committees of the United States Senate, has been increased because of his connection with the Burlington system of railroads that extend through all that country. The communication referred to by General Sumner as coming from the writer is as follows :

SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE NECESSITY OF AN ARMY POST IN THE VICINITY OF THE INDIAN RESERVATIONS OF WYOMING, MONTANA, AND SOUTH DAKOTA, AND THE ADVANTAGES OF SHERIDAN, WYO., FOR SUCH POST.

The settlers in the neighborhood of the great Crow, Sioux, and Northern Cheyenne reservations have felt serious uneasiness since the removal of the troops from Fort Custer. This is especially true of the people of northern Wyoming, which section, since the building of the Burlington Railroad, has filled up with a vigorous and aggressive population. In the counties of Johnson and Sheridan, in Wyoming, contiguous to the Crow Reserve, there are about 10,000 people engaged in agriculture, mining, and other pursuits.

The Big Horn Mountains are being explored by mining prospectors, and the villages and towns are showing great activity. The town of Sheridan, with its excellent system of waterworks, electric plant, etc., has about 2,800 people, and is growing vigorously.

The inhabitants of this section are not alarmists, but they know the nature and the instincts of the Indian, and realize that with all the efforts that have been made for his civilization the few years that have elapsed since he was the terror of the frontier have not tamed him. The monuments on the Custer battlefield on the Crow Reservation stand as evidences of his savagery and power.

The Crows and Northern Cheyennes number about 3,500, and are on a reservation of between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 acres. The Sioux (the most warlike and aggressive of all tribes) number about 20,000, and are a constant threat to the peace of the Northwest. Only last summer (1897) there was an outbreak of the Northern Cheyennes and threats that the settlers in their vicinity would be killed. The difficulty was only prevented by the quick transfer, and maintenance for several months, of troops from Fort Custer to the agency.

Southwest of Sheridan is the Wind River Reservation, upon which are located the Shoshones and Arapahoes, numbering about 3,000. An examination of the map will show that Sheridan is situate near the center of the country containing the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Sioux, Shoshone and Arapahoe reservations, and that there radiate from it good wagon roads, built and maintained at great expense, with the Burlington Railroad affording quick communication with all parts of the country. West of the Big Horn Mountains, which are back of Sheridan, is the great Big Horn Basin, into which settlers are now pushing, attracted by the richness of its soil and the opportunities for easy irrigation.

To this basin has been constructed a fine wagon road, about 100 miles long, built by the people of Sheridan and vicinity.

It is worthy of mention that many frontier forts and garrisons have been abandoned of late years, notably McKinney, Steel, Saunders, Bridger, and Sidney. Others can, with advantage, be vacated, there being no military reason for their continuance. The troops at Fort Custer have been removed, because of the unsanitary condition of that post and that the buildings are uninhabitable. These were the only reasons for its vacation, it being admitted that there was no military reason therefor. If a new post shall be established at Sheridan, Fort Custer, and Fort Washakie, which are in a dilapidated condition, and if continued must be rebuilt at a great expense, can be abandoned and the land restored to the public domain. If this should result, then there would be but two army posts in Wyoming, the one at Sheridan (to be called, perhaps, Fort Miles, commemorating the services of that distinguished leader in the last Sioux outbreak, and the head of the Army) and the other at Cheyenne. They would form a part of a line of interior garrisons along the base of the Rocky Mountains, and in order of regular succession from the line of British America would be Forts Assiniboine, Mont., on the line of the Great Northern Railroad; Fort Harrison, at Helena, Mont., on the Northern Pacific Railroad; Fort Miles, Sheridan, Wyo., on the line of the Burlington System; Fort Russell, Cheyenne, Wyo., on the Union Pacific Railroad, and Fort Logan, at Denver, Colo., the center of railroad communication in the mountain region of the West.

In the Rocky Mountain region are vast areas of timber lands at the head of the rivers that unite to form the Missouri and the Mississippi. The preservation of these forests has taxed the best wisdom of the legislative and executive branches of the Government, and the laws prohibiting their destruction and the denudation of timber lands have been futile. The setting apart of vast areas by Executive proclamation will not prevent further damage unless the forests are placed under the protecting care of intelligent men, with governmental authority to back up their effort for preservation. No better guardianship can be had, under existing conditions, than the Army of the United States, and if this line of posts shall be established and maintained the destruction that comes from the act of the depredator and the careless can, in a large degree, be prevented. The excellence of the policy of substituting the officers and men of the Army for civilians has been shown by the excellent results obtained in placing army officers in charge of Indian tribes as agents and the better government of the Yellowstone Park and the preservation there of objects of great interest and value.

The advantages presented by Sheridan for garrison purposes can not be excelled. It is a health-giving spot on the eastern slope of the Big Horn Mountains. It has an abundance of the purest water in the numerous never-failing streams. It has a fine system of waterworks for domestic supply and a system of ditches for irrigation. The United States is the owner of lands peculiarly fitted and appropriately placed for an army post. Sections 7 and 8, township 56 north, range 84 west, containing 1,280 acres, would make an ideal place for the new post. This land is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Sheridan, and is susceptible of irrigation by a very inexpensive ditch. It can be supplied with water and electric lights from the city waterworks, and easy and safe drainage can be had in the swift current of Goose Creek. Coal is being mined in large quantities in the immediate vicinity and can be placed in the post at 75 cents to \$1 per ton. Hay and grain are to be had at low prices, and all supplies for both men and animals can be had cheaply. Sheridan has an excellent school system.

which should commend itself as valuable to families that make their homes at the garrison.

It is earnestly hoped that Congress may see the wisdom of the establishment with all possible speed of the post proposed.

CHARLES F. MANDERSON.

I also attach a communication on file in the War Department from Mr. E. Gillette, civil engineer, because it presents valuable information upon the subject in hand the writer being one of the earliest settlers in the vicinity of the Big Horn Mountains, and having more correct knowledge of the physical conditions in that section than any other man.

SOME EFFICIENT REASONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT FORT AT
SHERIDAN, WYO.

The town of Sheridan, Wyo., is located 15 miles south of the boundary line between Montana and Wyoming. The Big Horn Mountains, 16 miles to the southwest, have a large drainage area, which acts as a great reservoir in storing water for irrigation. Twenty-two streams flow from these mountains, emptying their waters into the Yellowstone River. Within 30 miles of Sheridan there are 500 miles of streams, thickly settled on both sides. Twenty-five miles northwest of Sheridan there is a wide gap between the Big Horn Mountains and the Wolf Mountains, through which has passed from time immemorial the travel and traffic of the country. This great natural highway was followed by immigrants in the settlement of Oregon, Washington, and Montana. About 1865 the Government established a line of posts along this route for the protection of her citizens, but abandoned them shortly after the massacre of Colonel Fetterman and his troops, in 1866. The old route had to be used, so immigrants forced their way through by organizing into large bodies, and many conflicts occurred with the Indians, who fought hard and successfully for a time to hold on to this, their best land, for all purposes relating to subsistence for themselves, their stock, and Indian life generally.

To the white man who had traveled for hundreds of miles through the sagebrush and bad-water country of the south and east, seeing scarcely the green leaves of a cottonwood tree to relieve his feverish sight, the dawning of the Big Horn Mountains, covered with dark pine trees, was a most agreeable sight; and on approaching the base of the mountains, where the sagebrush gave way to great abundance of nutritious grasses, the feeding ground of the buffalo, elk, and deer, while the streams, teeming with black-spotted Rocky Mountain trout, gave assurance of pure cold water in place of the customary alkali creek or spring, this country seemed a veritable paradise. It was therefore bitterly fought for. Fetterman and his entire command were "wiped out," while the same thing occurred later to the gallant Custer, after Crook had been fought to a standstill on the Rosebud and he had returned to the present site of Sheridan, his great camping ground, for recruiting and building up his wasted command. The warlike Sioux and Cheyennes, dissatisfied with the country of the Dakotas, flocked to this region, and when the soldiers arrived to drive back or exterminate these Indians they met a foe worthy of their steel. The Indian, having plenty of meat for his own household, his ponies as well as himself in the pink of condition, fought his white brother to a finish, and came off victorious in many of the great battles fought.

It is natural that the country which has witnessed the hardest-fought battles and still contains many of the warriors participating in those conflicts should also witness the last struggle for supremacy. The simple fact that only a few months ago the settlers deserted their homes and flocked to Sheridan, while the men armed themselves and determined to either drive out the Indians or die in the attempt, bears out this inference. The desire to live in peace and security, so that their families were safe and their stock unmolested, was so strong that any sacrifice was not too great to obtain the object desired. On the other hand, the Indians, watching with jealous eyes the increasing flocks and herds of the white man and his encroachments on their domain, determined to fight, and, with a hatred born of many differences in the past, we had the spectacle of two fierce and warlike bodies of men facing each other for several weeks, when the slightest occasion on either side would have precipitated a conflict which would have made history as the latest and probably one of the most bloody fights ever occurring between the white men and Indians. That this fight will not occur in the future we have not the slightest assurance.

It would be vastly better for Congress to take action before than after the conflict occurs.

The various tribes of Indians now located on reservations within 500 miles of Sheridan are well informed about this country and more familiar with the mountain trails and passes to-day than the white man.

The great timber reserve in the Big Horn Mountains lying to the west and south

of Sheridan was made, not on the request of the people most interested, but by those unacquainted with the country, who, for purposes of general good and the purpose of building up an extensive and expensive forestry commission, had sufficient influence to have the lands segregated from the public domain.

The people whose homes and property are directly influenced by this reserve are extremely doubtful as to the expediency of the same. It is the opinion here that to accomplish any good these timber reserves should be under the control of the Army, that they may be properly policed and a force ready at hand to subdue what now prove to be great forest fires, but which could be put out before much damage was done by an efficient force ready at hand. The Army, with its equipment always ready at a moment's warning, could move quickly to the scene of the fire and subdue it before the timber covering great sections of country has been burned over and the burning continue until the next winter's snow eliminates the fire.

If the timber, which requires at least two hundred years to mature, continues to be destroyed in the future as it has been in the past few years, this great region of country will be rendered almost uninhabitable and the greatest damage possible be sustained.

There is no use in making timber reserves unless an adequate force is supplied to extinguish fires in their first stages. The gravity of the situation can be somewhat appreciated when it is understood that every time an extensive fire occurs in the Big Horn Mountains the ground, which is composed of a thick layer of pine needles and vegetable matter, burns as well as the timber, with the result that when the spring rains come all the soil is washed away, the bare rocks left, and a mountain torrent exists in place of an even-flowing stream. The greatest utility of the mountains, as a great sponge, storing water for irrigation in the hot summer months, ceases, and barren, dry washes exist where streams formerly flowed, filled with trout for food and carrying waters sufficient to irrigate vast tracts of land affording prosperous and happy homes for thousands of our citizens.

That the supervision of this reserve comes better within the province of the Army than any other organization is believed by the people of the West. It can be more cheaply and efficiently performed in this way than any other. By the establishment of a post at Sheridan a location would happily be secured for all time to come of the greatest utility; protection for the settlers and Indians alike, and the great irrigation systems and supplies of water be conserved. The climatic conditions are almost perfect, while the cost of subsistence is reduced to the minimum. The quality of grains and grasses raised here excels that of any other section of the country. Horses attain their greatest strength and perfection. The whole region round about is underlaid with coal veins from 4 to 30 feet in thickness, and this fuel is cheaper than elsewhere in the United States. Copper, principally, is being discovered in large quantities in the adjacent mountains, and the whole country gives promise of being able to support a dense population in the future, where the cost of living will be reduced to a minimum and life last the longest and happiest.

The history of this country for the white man will but repeat the history already made for the red man. The red man depended solely upon nature, and she supplied him bountifully; but nature, carefully conserved by the thought, energy, and inventions of the white man, gives assurance of wonderful results. That the development of this country may continue unchecked, the lives of the people rendered safe and prosperous, and the great forces of nature be stored for future generations, depends greatly upon the fact as to whether a post is established here now or not. As long as we have an Army it has to be maintained at certain points. If these points are selected where the best natural conditions exist—namely, that of commanding a large scope of country, climatic, facilities of transportation, cheapness and ease in securing subsistence, forage, and fuel, located near the scene where the next trouble may occur in war and where the Army would be of the greatest utility in times of peace—then there is no question but that Sheridan or its immediate vicinity would afford probably the best location west of the Mississippi River. This country was abandoned once before, as far as posts are concerned, by the Government with disastrous results, culminating in the Custer massacre. There is considerable indication that the former result is about to be repeated.

All the forts in this vicinity have been recently abandoned, Fort McKinney on the south on account of lacking transportation facilities, Fort Custer to the north on account of sanitary and dilapidated condition.

At Sheridan, midway between the two, these objections are eliminated. The great Burlington Railroad makes this place a division point. The systems of railroad to the north and south have numerous posts located on their lines. The country along the Burlington route has been left so that the people feel compelled to rely on their individual efforts in case of trouble rather than on the Army. Where there is a possibility of Indian troubles, the development of that region is most seriously handicapped by the abandonment of the military posts in its vicinity. As the old posts out West become untenable and are found to have been located off from what

proves to be the permanent routes for conducting the transportation of the country for future ages, a few points can be safely selected where the densest population will be and where a part of the Army can be most effectively placed for all times to come. Sheridan, Wyo., is such a location.

Montana to the north and Colorado to the south are comparatively well supplied with forts, and the people of northern Wyoming pray that like conditions may be made to exist here.

EDWARD GILLETTE.

The abundant reasons set forth in these communications and the repeated demands made by the citizens residing with their families in the vicinity of the great country contiguous to the Indian reservations have led to the introduction of the bill S. 5223. Full investigation by the War Department has led to a favorable report upon it and the urging of the Secretary of War that it be speedily made a law. Fully realizing the pressing necessity of such action, I respectfully pray that the bill be passed and the erection and maintenance of this most important garrison follow.

CHARLES F. MANDERSON.