

THE BLACKFOOT OPTIMIST

Anderson, Atty. J. L. 4110

VOL. IV NO. 6

BLACKFOOT, BINGHAM COUNTY, IDAHO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1911

\$2.00 PER YEAR

LEASING OF RESERVATION LAND

The Superintendent of the Fort Hall Reservation Gives a Citizen Information in Regard to Leasing Indian Allotments.

Fort Hall Indian Agency, Ross Fork, Idaho, Dec. 31, 1910.

Sir:— I am in receipt of your letter of December 22, 1910, enclosing a clipping from the Pocatello Tribune and asking me certain questions in regard to the leasing of lands allotted to the Indians on the Fort Hall reservation. Taking up your questions in their order I answer them as follows:

FIRST—In leasing 160 or 320 acres of good land, as near Pocatello as is possible, what would probably be the yearly rental per year?

In the first place I do not think the Secretary of the Interior will permit any one person to lease more than 160 acres of the irrigable land, and I doubt if he will let any one man lease more than 80 acres. Lease may be made on a crop-rental basis or a cash rental at the option of the Indian, and as one tract of land may be and frequently is worth more than another, it is manifestly impossible to name a cash yearly acre rate. At the outset of the leasing business there will be a few short term "improvement leases" on raw land made on favorable terms. The lessee will be required to clear such land of sage brush and break it up, build necessary laterals to get water on the land and possibly fence it.

SECOND—What would be the greatest number of years for which a lease could now be secured?

The Act of Congress, approved June 25, 1910, names five years as the longest term for which a lease can be made. The Department usually approves leases for terms of three years and no overlapping leases will be approved until within a period of seven months before the expiration of an existing lease; that is if a three year lease is to expire March 1, 1912, no renewal or subsequent one will be made on the land before August 1, 1911.

As the producing value of these lands is not well established at this time, I do not believe that any five year leases will be approved at the beginning of the leasing work. Leases for one year are not infrequent on lands in cultivation.

THIRD—Could I secure say a 20 year lease with an option on buying at expiration of that time, at price now stated?

No, the longest possible term under the law is five years. No option of any kind is or can be given. It is the policy of the Department, however, to give a preference to the old lessee when a new lease is made on a tract of land, where he has lived up to the terms of the old lease. Under this policy, lessees are usually able to hold a single tract as long as they care to lease a farm.

FOURTH—What would be the charge per acre for water?

This is a matter that can not be stated with accuracy at this time, and I think will depend somewhat on the kind of lease made, i. e. whether on the grain rent or cash basis. The water rights are appertenant to the land and the maintenance charges will of course have to be paid.

FIFTH—What taxes would there be?

The land is free from any kind of taxes as long as the United States holds the title in trust for the Indians. When title passes from the United States we will have no further right to supervise the leasing or in any manner control the land.

In addition to the above given in answer to your questions, I have to say the Department does not allow an able-bodied adult Indian less than fifty years of age to lease all of his land nor any of it if he is in a position to farm it to reasonably good advantage. It must be borne in mind that the primary object of allotting lands to individual Indians here and providing such lands with an elaborate and expensive irrigation system is to make self-supporting Indian farmers, and not to provide them with lands to lease to whites. The Department does not admit that "Indians are proverbially poor farmers," but even if they were, they could never be made into farmers by allowing them to lease all their land. The Department desires to locate among the Indians practical working farmers who are temperate and law-abiding and who will be an example for

the Indians to pattern after, both as to their personal conduct and as farmers. In order to get this kind of men, the Department limits the amount of land that one man is allowed to lease and every lease carries in it a covenant that the lessee shall "work and farm the premises in a good and husbandlike manner." There is also a covenant against subleasing, assigning or in any manner transferring any interest in the lease; this is in order that the Department may be sure that the lessee will be a farmer and not a speculator in leases and that a lessee may not have the right to put some white man on Indian lands whose habits and behavior would make an Indian blush with shame. A bond by two responsible men is required with every lease to secure the payment of rent when due and the carrying out of the covenants contained in every lease. The violation of any of the covenants contained in a lease shall forfeit the contract and the lessor may re-enter and take possession of the land. All leases are made in the Superintendent's office on approved Departmental forms; both the lessor and lessee appearing in the office for that purpose.

It is allowable for a white man to visit an Indian for the purpose of negotiating with him for a lease on his lands to be made in the manner provided by law, but the actual making of a lease, deed, mortgage or any contract purporting to convey any interest in an Indian's allotted land is by Section 8, Act of June 25, 1910, made a misdemeanor and subjects the offender to a fine of not more than \$500 for the first offense and on conviction for a second offense may be fined \$500 and imprisoned for not more than one year.

There are two classes of Indian lessors, who are termed "competent" and "non-competent" to manage their own business affairs. I may say that for the time being every allottee on this reservation will be deemed to be "non-competent" so far as the leasing of his land is concerned, and all rent will be paid into this office and be handled and disbursed as individual Indian money under existing regulations.

Very respectfully,
EVAN W. ESTEP,
Superintendent.

First Official Action

The first official act of James H. Hawley on becoming governor of Idaho was performed immediately after his inauguration Monday morning, when he sat down at his desk and wrote a letter to Elizabeth Lida Atkinson, his 12-week-old granddaughter, in which he notified her that he had just been inaugurated as governor of Idaho, and that this was the first signature written by him as the state's executive. The letter, the envelope in which it was addressed to the young lady, the pen and penholder with which it was written, are being preserved in trust by Mr. and Mrs. Reilly Atkinson, the parents of Miss Elizabeth, as a memento which she may hold dear in future years.—Statesman.

Organized Basket Ball Team.

The high school has organized a basket ball team with Charles Kiefer as their leader. The boys have secured their first game at American Falls on Friday, January 6th. The girls team will also accompany them to show the girls of the Power city how the fast game of basket ball is played. Misses Downing and Thomas seldom miss their mark when they throw for a basket. Kiefer and Parkinson are going to monopolize the baskets for the high school boys, and Gerdes will handle the ball at center with perfect ease. Pennington, Miller and Baker will endeavor to shoo away any chance of the ball ever entering the American.

Will Establish Feed Barn.

R. E. Hansen, of the Red Barn, contemplates erecting a mammoth feed shed in the rear of the Red Barn, and will conduct a feeding yard, where the farmers can bring their own feed, and for a nominal sum stand their teams in the yard, having their goods protected, and their horses will not be exposed to the weather. This is something that has long been needed in Blackfoot and the arrangements of Mr. Hansen are highly commendable.

THE BOND ISSUE IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Appropos the bond election Saturday of this week, it might be well to give the public a short review of conditions in school matters as they now exist. Blackfoot now has in actual use two regular school buildings and the transformed gymnasium. In the Central building there are ten school rooms, in the Irving building eight, in the gymnasium two; all of these are now fully occupied by the pupils. There are now enrolled nine hundred pupils. Eighteen rooms are used for seating purposes, two for recitation rooms in connection with the high school. This gives an average of just fifty pupils to the room for the entire school. Of course these pupils can not be evenly distributed in the several grades for there are always more in the lower grades than in the higher. We have, as a result, four divisions of the primary but have no room to provide for more second or third primary divisions. As a result there are now in actual attendance 112 pupils in the third grade who are packed into two rooms of moderate size, and instructed by the teachers. The Seventh B. class, now quartered in the gymnasium, has more than fifty enrolled, the Eighth grade has more than fifty and the high school has 128, all of whom can not be seated in the assembly room, although the seats have been crowded together in such shape as to leave no room for side or back aisles, no place for a teacher's desk or even a chair in the front of the room. The best efforts to ventilate a room thus crowded, are of no avail and one only has to see conditions here to realize that we are at a crisis, as far as room is concerned.

Now what is to be done? There are no more school rooms available for grades or high school. Even the basements are all occupied so far as it is possible to use them. The school population has increased at the rate of fifteen per cent for the past two years and the high school has made a growth of thirty per cent for two years and almost fifty per cent the present year. There is no building or part of building of the two now in use, that was designed for high school purposes, hence the present quarters are entirely inadequate to accommodate the pupils. There is no

assembly here large enough, there are no well equipped laboratories no class rooms, there is no commercial room, no lecture room, no domestic science department no place for drawing, in fact none of these things that go to make up a first class high school, according to the modern understanding of the term. The school board proposes to make the new building of sufficient size to accommodate not only the high school, and entirely modernize this department but to make room for the seventh and eighth grades as well. This would provide for five more grades in the present buildings or an increase of 250 pupils in the grades and 150 more in high school.

The present enrollment in the grades shows that next year's common school graduates from the ones now attending will reach ninety, so that a division of the eighth grade will be absolutely necessary next September.

The conditions are such that the school is at a very critical stage. There must be more room provided or half day sessions for at least three grades will be necessary next September, while even now the high school is not filling its full mission on account of insufficient room and inadequate equipment.

Twin Falls has under construction a high school building which is to cost \$60,000, Pocatello now has a \$80,000 structure, Idaho Falls contemplates an \$85,000 building, Coeur d'Alene is building a \$60,000 exclusive high school, so that it behooves us to get in line and make it possible to keep our school system in the front ranks.

A modern building costing \$125,000, which can be furnished and equipped for less than \$5,000 would accommodate 250 high school pupils. It would be in every way adequate to the needs of the town for many years to come, if not for all time.

This is what the bond issue means and in brief these are the conditions which have given rise to the bond election. The board is asking for nothing that is not an absolute necessity to the community.

Respectfully yours,
W. D. VINCENT.

WILL ASK FOR APPROPRIATION TO FIX THE FORT HALL SAND ROAD

State aid for the repair early next year of the famous "sand road" across the Fort Hall Indian reservation between Blackfoot and Pocatello is more than a probability, according to Hon. Peter G. Johnston of Blackfoot, state representative from Bingham county.

Touching on the matter of state aid for the Pocatello-Blackfoot "sand road," Representative Johnston said to a Tribune man last evening that he would make every effort to secure the issuance of state bonds in a sum sufficient to make the six miles of sand passable for all sorts of vehicles. Two automobiles loaded with Blackfoot and Idaho Falls men came down from the Grove City yesterday as far as Ross Fork, where they were met by an auto party headed by Robert J. Hayes of this city. In the party from the upper valley were Civil Engineer Beech of Idaho Falls and Engineer Peterson of Blackfoot, who were commissioned by Representative Johnston to make a trip over the road and prepare a map thereof for use in presenting the matter of a bond issue to the legislature. They were also instructed to submit estimates of the probable cost of placing the road in shape for automobile travel at all times of the year. This will be preliminary to the construction of a road that will be a credit to the state and which will be constituted the real automobile gateway to the Pacific northwest.

The auto party from Pocatello consisted of J. B. Trist, the garage man, R. J. Hayes and George Greene.

The Blackfoot party included in addition to those mentioned, Dan Jones

Dr. Patrie and K. P. Brown, of the Blackfoot Optimist.

The map to be prepared by the engineers will be large enough to show the relative position of the "sand road" and such points of interest as the Yellowstone National park, the great hunting and fishing grounds of Custer and Lemhi counties, the famous outing places of Blaine county and the Wood river region, Boise Pocatello, Blackfoot, Idaho Falls and the magnificent Snake river valley, and other points of interest in this region.

Pocatello and Blackfoot are on the main auto highway through this region. Annually hundreds of cars from all parts of the middle west, particularly from Utah, pass through here on their way to the pleasure places of the upper valley of the Snake. Thousands of other cars would make the journey were it not that the fame, or rather the infame, of the Ross Fork "sand road," has spread throughout the nation. Automobile guide books, showing the various routes of travel in America, contain invariably a warning against the heart-breaking sand road above Pocatello. Warnings are given that only the most powerful cars can negotiate this six miles of mercury-like sand. Even then the advice is given to deflate the rear tires before entering the sand belt, and the statement is made that low gear, or at best the intermediate, will be required thru the six miles of the bad road.

If by any means possible this stigma could be removed from the name of Idaho, and an automobile highway opened through the Gate City to the

magnificent upper valley of the Snake it would result in not only one of the finest possible advertisements, but would attract to this region thousands of auto tourists headed for the northwest, for the Yellowstone park, for Shoshone Falls, Twin Falls, Thousand Springs, for the great Island Park country in northern Fremont county (perhaps the most beautiful summer resort in the west), and to the innumerable other pleasure places of the Gem State.

Representative Johnston will have the hearty support of the Bannock county delegation, who, while all Democrats and therefore members of the minority party, will still have considerable influence in encouraging the support of other Democrats for the good road proposition.—Pocatello Tribune.

Blackfoot, Idaho, Dec. 30, 1910.
To the Hon. Peter G. Johnston,
Boise, Idaho.

Dear Sir:— We, the undersigned, engineers of Bingham county, beg leave to report that we have made a thorough examination and investigation in regard to the present condition of the main wagon road across the heavy sands between this city and Ross Fork, with a view to estimating the cost of a permanent improvement in the condition of the same, said road at the present time being in an almost impassable condition. In our opinion, a substantial macadamized highway for the distance of five (5) miles is the only permanent solution of the difficulty, necessitating little if any repairs for a considerable time to come. The estimated cost of such a roadway would be as follows: For 18 feet wide, \$100 per lineal foot, \$5,280.00 per mile, or \$26,400.00 for the total five miles. For 20 feet width, \$110 per lineal foot, \$5,808.00 per mile, or \$29,040.00 for the five miles. An additional sum of \$500 for purposes of clearing, grading and other incidental expenses. Said road would have an underfilling of stone, well rolled, and covered with crushed stone one foot thick at center and six inches at outer edges, the whole to be covered with a layer of clay to fill all voids.

Very respectfully submitted,
O. E. Peterson
Walter A. Funk
A. E. Christensen
Blackfoot, Idaho, Dec. 30, 1910.
To the Hon. Peter G. Johnston,
Boise, Idaho.
Dear Sir:— We, the undersigned, engineers of Bingham county, hereby beg leave to submit the report that we have made a thorough examination and investigation in regard to the present condition of the main wagon road across the heavy sands between this city and Ross Fork, with a view to estimating the cost of a permanent improvement in the condition of the same, said road at the present time being in an almost impassable condition. In our opinion a substantial macadamized highway for a distance of five (5) miles is the only permanent and feasible solution of the difficulty, necessitating little if any repairs for many years to come. For such a road eight (8) feet in width, with turnouts every one-quarter of a mile, we estimate the cost of construction at fifty-five cents (\$55) per lineal foot, \$2904.00 per mile, or \$14,520.00 for the entire piece of road way. Said road would have an underfilling of quarried rock or stone, covered with crushed stone and clay, the whole road bed thus made to be about one foot thick at the center, tapering down to about eight inches at the outer edges. We think such a roadway to be the only one insuring permanence and stability.
Very respectfully submitted,
O. E. Peterson
Walter A. Funk
A. E. Christensen
Engineers.
Residence Property For Sale
After the completion of my new residence, my property at the corner of Francis and Fisher streets, will be for sale. It consists of a nine room house, all modern conveniences, good basement, barn, coal and wood house, hen house, buggy shed, 110 fruit trees all good varieties. Terms to suit purchaser. R. E. Hansen, Red Barn, Blackfoot, Idaho.

Mr. and Mrs. John Briggs returned Tuesday from Rigby, where they spent the holiday season.

SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO POULTRY SHOW.

Arrangements Being Perfected For The Initial Exhibit, Which Promises To Excite Great Interest Throughout This Part of Idaho.

The date for the first annual poultry exhibit of the Southeastern Idaho Poultry Association has been set for January 25, 26, 27 and 28, 1911, and judging from the number of inquiries relative to entries received within the last few days by the secretary interest in the show is developing throughout this part of the west, as exhibitors from every part of the state are signifying an intention to participate in the association work by bringing their fowls here for the four days. The Blackfoot Auction company have voluntarily donated their large room next to the post office as an exhibition hall for the show and arrangements are made for stands upon which to place the pens. Owing to the limited amount of capital with which the association starts all exhibitors are requested to furnish their own pens for this year, but in the event of an exhibitor not doing so, pens will be furnished. Prof. Elmer Gimlin will judge the birds, which insures a positive scoring. All persons holding a membership card in the association will be granted the privilege of exhibiting as many birds as they desire, and all persons entering four hens and a rooster will be given a free membership to the organization. A charge of 25c per head for fowls will be charged. Many breeders of poultry throughout the United States are writing to the effect that they will donate articles for prizes. As yet the merchants of Blackfoot have not been solicited for prizes but as this show will bring to the city a number of outsiders for four days it would be nothing amiss for the business men to assist the association in their initial efforts, by volunteering to give some useful article as a prize to the winners.

The association wishes it understood that no one in the United States is barred from exhibiting fowls, dogs or pigeons. In fact exhibits from every locality are solicited and inquiries directed to the president or secretary relative to the show will be promptly answered.

Officer Presents Good Record
The office of assessor and collector will be turned over to Moses Wright by C. E. Crowley next Monday, and never in the history of this county was the affairs of the office in better shape than at present. It is the first time in fifteen years that the office work was so well finished, and in such good shape to turn over to a successor. The taxes are nearer paid up than ever before. From Saturday noon to Monday noon there was paid into the office \$86,000.00. There are 61,000 assessments and of that number 4,500 are recaptured for, with 500 in the mail at the present time, from which there has not been time to hear. Some assessments have been held back on account of error. Between 500 and 600 will go delinquent. They will amount to \$20,000. Deducing the latter amount from the \$325,000, total assessment, it leaves the condition of this county in a highly creditable state, speaking well for the prosperity of this part of Idaho.

New Residence Nearing Completion
The elegant new residence of R. E. Hansen on Judicial street, is nearing completion, and will be one of the finest in the city. It has every convenience, consists of seven rooms and bath. A cellar as large as the outside walls permit, is also a feature that adds materially to the many other attractive features. Mr. Hansen is building both his business and residence to stay, and is spending a vast amount of money on both. His livery business is splendidly equipped for everyone's convenience.

Fell From Horse.
Roy Randall, while driving to town from his dairy ranch north of town Tuesday evening, had an accident which has disabled him. The horse he was riding slipped on the ice and fell, throwing Mr. Randall in such a way as to injure him quite badly. His injuries preclude the possibility of his attending to his work in the dairy and his brother, Ray, is looking after his interests.