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Military road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley

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MILITARY ROAD FROM FORT LEAVENWORTH TO FORT RILEY.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 702.]

JANUARY 31, 1857.

Mr. FAULKNER, from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred House bill No. 702, to provide for the construction of military roads and bridges in the Territory of Kansas, have, according to order, had the same under consideration, and respectfully report :

The committee is not aware that the construction of a road from a point near Westport, Missouri, to Fort Union, in New Mexico, is at this time specially required for any military purposes. It would doubtless be important to emigrants and to persons engaged in trade with New Mexico, and in other respects promote the interests of the Territories of Kansas and New Mexico ; but as there are no considerations connected with the military service of the country which makes its construction at this time desirable, the committee decline to recommend it to the favorable consideration of the House.

In reference to the proposed road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley they concur with the Secretary of War, that important military advantages would be derived from its completion. It would render the communication between these two military posts and depots more certain and rapid, and would facilitate the movement of troops to New Mexico and against the Indians along the Arkansas.

By an act of Congress, approved the 3d of March, 1853, the sum of \$11,725 was appropriated "for bridges and establishing communications between Fort Leavenworth and the Republican forks of the Kansas river." Of this sum, we learn from the Quartermaster General, \$9,181 56 has been expended. To bridge the streams on that route, together with the necessary cost of excavation, &c., would require, in his opinion, a further appropriation of \$50,000.

The committee herewith annex, as a part of this their report, the letters of the Secretary of War and Quartermaster General on this subject

They accordingly recommend the accompanying bill as a substitute for the bill (No. 702) referred to them.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 28, 1857.

SIR: I have received and considered the letter of Hon. J. W. Whitfield, and the bill for the construction of roads and bridges in New Mexico, which you transmitted for the examination and opinion of the department.

In reply, I have the honor to state that important military advantages would be derived from the completion of the road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley, provided for in the bill. It would render the communication between two *important* military posts and depots more certain and rapid, and would facilitate the movement of troops to New Mexico and against the Indian tribes along the Arkansas. It will be perceived from the letter of the Quartermaster General of the army, which is transmitted herewith, that it is estimated to cost \$50,000.

A recent appropriation has been expended in the construction of a road from Fort Riley to the Arkansas—the extension of which to Fort Union, New Mexico, would still further promote some of the advantages to follow the completion of the road between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley, the establishment of Fort Leavenworth having reference to military communication in a northwest as well as southwest direction.

To emigrants, and those engaged in the trade with New Mexico, a road from Kansas City to the crossing of the Arkansas, on the route to Fort Union, would be preferred to that from Fort Leavenworth to the same point, since the distance by the two routes is nearly the same, and that from Kansas City has the advantage in starting from a point nearer to the large commercial cities than Fort Leavenworth; and by being located on the dividing ridge between the tributaries of the Kansas on the one side, and those of the Missouri and Arkansas on the other, avoids the crossing of difficult streams.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
JEFF'N DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

Hon. C. J. FAULKNER,
Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington city, January 22, 1857.

SIR: In reply to the note of the Hon. Charles J. Faulkner, of the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives, referred to this office yesterday with a letter of the Hon. J. W. Whitfield, urging the construction of certain roads within the Territory of Kansas, I have the honor to state that the only one of the routes proposed to be opened or improved, which is under the direction of the Quartermaster's Department, is that between Fort Leavenworth and

Fort Riley. To bridge the streams on that route, Congress, in 1853, appropriated \$11,725, of which \$9,781 56 has been expended, and a balance remains in the treasury entirely too small to be usefully applied. To bridge the streams on that route properly—namely, the Blue, Grasshopper, Soldier creek, and other small streams—together with the necessary expenditure in cutting down some hills on the route, which, it is said, cannot be avoided, will require, it is thought, not less than fifty or sixty thousand dollars. This route connects two great military depots, and the public interest would be greatly promoted by improving it, so as to render the communication more certain and rapid. All the other routes are important in their bearing on the national interests; they will, if opened, afford facilities to emigrants to reach the remote parts of the Territory, by which supplies for the frontier posts will be produced in their vicinity, and the necessity and expense of bringing them from a long distance will be avoided in a few years.

I return the papers referred to; and I am, sir, most respectfully,
your obedient servant,

THOS. S. JESUP,
Quartermaster General.

Hon. JEFF'N DAVIS,
Secretary of War, Washington city.