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Military Post at El Paso, Texas

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 21, 1879.—Ordered to be printed.

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

R E P O R T :

[To accompany bill S. 1662.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred Ex. Doc. No. 31, being the letter of the Secretary of War, addressed to the President of the Senate, under date 15th instant, communicating information in relation to the establishment of a military post in the vicinity of El Paso, Tex., and recommending an appropriation for the purpose, have considered the same, together with its accompanying documents.

The letter of the Secretary of War above referred to, and the accompanying documents, to wit: Letter of General Pope, commanding Department of the Missouri, dated February 19, 1878, addressed to the assistant adjutant-general Division of the Missouri; the indorsement of Lieutenant-General Sheridan, commanding Division of Missouri, dated February 25, 1878; the indorsement of General Sherman thereon, dated March 2, 1878; the letter of Colonel Hatch, Ninth Cavalry, dated December 5, 1878; the indorsement of General Pope thereon, dated December 10, 1878, and of General Sheridan, dated December 19, are as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, January 15, 1879.

To the President of the Senate:

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to the Senate copies of reports from the commanding general of the Department of Missouri, in regard to the establishment of a military post in the vicinity of El Paso, Tex.

Generals Sherman and Sheridan recommend that \$40,000 be asked for the construction of a post in the vicinity named, and I recommend the appropriation of that sum for the purpose.

Very respectfully,

GEO. W. MCCRARY,
Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, February 19, 1878.

SIR: Fort Bliss, Texas, having been included within the limits of this department, and it having become necessary to reoccupy it, I beg to invite the attention of the Lieutenant-General to the fact that the government owns neither land nor buildings there.

The buildings formerly occupied by the troops, and known as Fort Bliss, were rented at an annual cost of \$2,500, but when it became necessary to reoccupy the point, these buildings, always unsuited to the purpose, were found to be in such a state of dilapidation as to be unfit for occupancy without extensive and expensive repairs. Other buildings in the vicinity have accordingly been hired and are now occupied by the troops.

MILITARY POST AT EL PASO, TEXAS.

The condition of affairs in that section will, I am sure, require the presence of troops for a long time (had the post been garrisoned properly, the disturbances at San Elizario would scarcely have happened), and it is much cheaper and better on all accounts that the government should own the buildings, at least, which the troops occupy.

In my opinion, a force of at least four companies must be maintained in the vicinity of El Paso, and I recommend that an appropriation be asked for a sum necessary to erect the buildings required to accommodate them.

Colonel Hatch, commanding the district of New Mexico, estimates that \$40,000 will be sufficient for the purpose.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. POPE,
Brevet Major-General, U. S. A., Commanding.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Headquarters Division of the Missouri, Chicago, Ill.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, February 25, 1878.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

I fully coincide in the views of General Pope, and recommend that the sum of \$40,000 be asked for the purpose of constructing a post in the vicinity named. It is on an international line, on which trouble is likely to occur unless we have a sufficient garrison to keep order.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, March 2, 1878.

Respectfully submitted to the Hon. Secretary of War, approved.

Sooner or later we will be forced to maintain garrisons on the Mexican border, and the sum asked for is not excessive.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO,
Santa Fé, N. Mex., December 5, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to request that an appropriation for building the proposed post in the vicinity of El Paso, Texas, be again urged. Estimates and plans for a four-company post have been already forwarded. This post is an absolute necessity, as well as a matter of economy. The troops are now quartered in rented buildings.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD HATCH,
Colonel Ninth Cavalry, Commanding.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT MISSOURI,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, December 10, 1878.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army through headquarters Military Division Missouri. The plans and estimates of the new post at El Paso were forwarded approved by me on July 21, 1878. The Quartermaster-General, under date of September 25, 1878, stated that, owing to the failure of Congress to appropriate funds for the purpose, no new post at El Paso can be constructed. I recommend that the necessary steps be taken to ask for an appropriation for the purpose during the present session of Congress.

JNO. POPE,
Brevet Major-General, U. S. A., Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, December 19, 1878.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army, concurring in the recommendation of the commanding general Department of the Missouri that appropriation be asked from Congress for construction of post at El Paso, in accordance with estimate already forwarded.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

El Paso is the extreme western point of the State of Texas, lies on the east bank of the Rio Grande, separated from Mexico only by that river. New Mexico lies north of and approaches near to El Paso.

It is a point through which the great stage routes from San Antonio and Fort Worth, Texas, pass going west to Arizona, California, &c., and is a point on the line of several contemplated railroads.

The post is necessary in view of the frequently disturbed relations along the Rio Grande, as well as for the protection of the mails against Indian and other depredators.

The serious outbreak last summer in San Elizario, in El Paso County, in which it is charged that the citizens of Mexico participated, and in which a number of American citizens were killed, it is believed would not have occurred had there been troops at El Paso under an efficient commander. The post formerly occupied by troops (Fort Bliss) was abandoned for reasons stated by General Pope, in his letter of February 19, 1878, made part of this report, and the committee concur in the opinion of General Pope in the same letter, to wit, "had the post been garrisoned properly, the disturbances at San Elizario would scarcely have happened." Such outbreaks should be prevented, if possible. They endanger the peace between the United States and Mexico, and as a preventive the presence of well-ordered troops is salutary. Besides, it is the duty of the government to protect the peaceable and law-abiding citizens on the outposts of civilization in their lives and property. The sum asked is \$40,000, with which to purchase a site and create a four-company post, a post of that size being deemed sufficient. The committee consider the recommendation of the Secretary of War as wise, and the amount asked reasonable. Wherefore the committee report the accompanying bill and recommend its passage.

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