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Depredations on Indian Reservations

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 5, 1882.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. CAMERON, of Wisconsin, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1646.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the message of the President of the United States, communicating draft of a bill to prevent depredations on Indian reservations, and the correspondence relating thereto, have considered the same, and report thereon as follows:

The following is a copy of the message of the President, also of the letters of the Secretary of the Interior and of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

I transmit herewith a communication from the Secretary of the Interior, with a draft of a bill to prevent timber depredations on Indian reservations, and correspondence noted by the Secretary.

The subject is presented for the consideration of Congress.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, February 3, 1882.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 20, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith for your consideration a draft of a bill prepared in the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, extending the provisions of section 5388 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, for the protection and preservation of timber, over Indian lands, together with the letter of the Commissioner, of this date, recommending the adoption of the measure.

Concurring in the views of the Commissioner, I respectfully request that the subject may be transmitted for the consideration of Congress.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. J. KIRKWOOD,

Secretary.

The PRESIDENT.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, January 20, 1882.

SIR: In furtherance of the recommendation contained in my late annual report for the necessity of prompt legislation in order to put a stop to timber depredations upon Indian lands, I have the honor to transmit herewith the draft (in duplicate) of a bill for the purposes named, which I respectfully recommend for transmission to Congress.

I cannot too strongly urge upon the department the importance of early action by Congress upon this subject. As stated in my report, in the Indian Territory especially,

spoliation of valuable walnut timber has been for a long time past, and still is, being constantly carried on, and unless some stringent and effective measures are devised to stop it, that whole section of country will be completely denuded of timber; moreover, it is apprehended by those competent to judge, that this wholesale stripping of timber will result in disastrous climatic effects.

The whole subject was fully presented by my predecessors in office, in annual reports for 1879 and 1880, and the inefficiency of existing laws pointed out, with recommendations for the enactment of such measures as would effectually prevent wanton cutting and destruction of timber upon Indian reservations. (See Annual Reports Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1879, p. xlvii; 1880, p. xix.) In these recommendations I fully concur.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. PRICE,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Section 5388 of the Revised Statutes, which this bill proposes to amend, reads as follows, viz:

Every person who unlawfully cuts, or aids or is employed in unlawfully cutting, or wantonly destroys, or procures to be wantonly destroyed, any timber standing upon the lands of the United States, which, in pursuance of law, may be reserved or purchased for military or other purposes, shall pay a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, and be imprisoned not more than twelve months.

“Every person who unlawfully cuts, or aids, or is employed in unlawfully cutting, or wantonly destroys, or procures to be wantonly destroyed, any timber standing upon the lands of the United States, which, in pursuance of law, may be reserved or purchased for military or other purposes, shall pay a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, and be imprisoned not more than twelve months.”

Your committee are of the opinion that said bill, if it becomes a law, will tend to prevent the wanton cutting and destruction of timber upon Indian reservations, and we therefore recommend that the bill do pass.