

5-19-1882

Report : Petition of L. Hentig

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 19, 1882.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. GROOME, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 3539.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3539) to increase the pension of Mrs. Laura Hentig, have considered the same, and report:

The House bill is identical with Senate bill 754, upon which your committee some time since made an unfavorable report, which was adopted by the Senate. The vote adopting the report was subsequently reconsidered by the Senate, and the Senate bill was referred to your committee for further consideration.

The report of the House Committee on Invalid Pensions, which sets out the facts of the case, in the main with accuracy, is as follows:

The facts in this case are that Capt. Edmund C. Hentig was an officer of the United States Army, on duty with his regiment, the Sixth United States Cavalry, at Fort Apache, Arizona Territory. That on the 29th day of August, 1881, he formed, with his company, a part of the command under Col. E. A. Carr, commanding Sixth Cavalry, United States Army, which marched to Cibicu Creek, near the said Fort Apache, and on the 30th the command was surprised and attacked by hostile Apache Indians, who inflicted serious injury and loss of life upon said command; that at the beginning of the hostilities the said Captain Hentig was shot and instantly killed by said hostile Indians.

Mrs. Laura Hentig, the widow of the said Captain Hentig, has been an invalid for several years, and, from the effects of malaria and the shock of her husband's sudden and cruel death, is suffering from complete nervous prostration; and it is in proof, as the opinion of W. M. Goodell, M. D., of the University of Pennsylvania, that in all probability she will never be able to earn a livelihood for herself or invalid daughter.

Mrs. Hentig is poor, and her present pension of \$20 per month is scarcely sufficient to pay for necessary medical attendance. In view of all the surrounding circumstances your committee regard this case as one involving unusual hardships. They would, therefore, recommend the passage of the bill granting a pension to Mrs. Laura Hentig at the rate of \$50 per month.

This case is one of a very large class. A faithful officer, who had accumulated no property, lost his life from one of the dangers incident to the service. He left surviving him an invalid widow and daughter, who find that the pension of \$20 a month, which the widow receives under the general law, affords them a very meager support.

In the opinion of your committee there is no propriety in increasing this lady's pension to \$50 a month, unless Congress is prepared to grant a like increase of pension to all widows of captains and officers of higher grades who are poor and in broken health, and whose husbands lost their lives in battle. Such increase, if granted at all, should be by a

general act, and not by a vast number of special acts, and would very greatly enlarge the amount to be annually paid out for pensions.

Your committee, therefore, cannot permit any sentiment of sympathy for a deserving lady to induce them to recommend the passage of a bill which would create a very bad precedent. They therefore recommend that bill H. R. 3539 be indefinitely postponed.