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Military Instruction

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 22, 1886.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 7192.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred H. R. 7192, "to provide a school of instruction for cavalry and light artillery, and for the construction and completion of quarters, barracks, and stables at certain posts for the use of the Army of the United States," have had the same under consideration and submit the following report thereon:

The bill (H. R. 7192) directs the Secretary of War to establish on the military reservation at Fort Riley a permanent school of instruction for drill and practice for the cavalry and light-artillery service of the Army of the United States, which shall also be a depot for recruits; and for these purposes, and to construct necessary quarters, barracks, and stables, it appropriates \$200,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary.

On this first proposition in the bill your committee content themselves with reciting in support thereof the following considerations from the report of the House Committee on Military Affairs:

An infantry soldier may be made in a few months, while it requires very much more time to make an efficient cavalryman and artilleryman.

It seems to this committee, then, that they are best discharging their duty to the American people when they recommend such measures as will tend to make our little army more perfect, well equipped, thoroughly educated and disciplined, and fully up to the highest standard in everything that goes to make success certain in case of conflict, and to have it in hand for use, with an organization subject to expansion to any proportion that probable exigency may ever require, with a full corps of officers and non-commissioned officers who may rapidly assimilate new recruits to the old soldiers, and inspire all with that *elan* necessary to accomplish great results.

The light batteries in our service have scarcely fired a gun since the war, and that arm, so efficient in the late service, has stood still since the war, and progress, with its steady and unceasing march, has left them far in the rear. This should not be so. We have the men and the means, and we should keep fully abreast with all the improvements and practice of the day.

It seems like trifling with the name of cavalry to send raw recruits, unaccustomed to ride even, to regiments to be mounted with saber, carbine, and pistol, to pursue marauding bands of Indians expert on horseback and proficient in the use of the rifle. A school is needed for both men and horses for cavalry, and a school is needed for batteries where the range is sufficient for any caliber of piece.

At Fort Riley, where this school is proposed to be located, the Government owns a reservation of over 20,000 acres of land ample for the operation of the batteries and the cavalry, and its location favorable, by reason of railway facilities, for distribution of troops upon the shortest notice to any exposed point.

In an economic view this measure is desirable, for at Riley we have wood and water in abundance, and forage and supplies can be furnished at the cheapest rates.

As this bill passed the House it also proposed to appropriate \$175,000 for the completion of the quarters and barracks at Fort D. A. Russell,

in Wyoming Territory, and to enlarge and complete the quarters and barracks at Fort Robinson, in Nebraska, suitable in capacity for ten companies. This latter provision substantially had the approval of your committee and of the Senate at the last session (S. 1935, Report 930); and the bill (S. 1935), embracing a provision for Fort Niobrara, also was reported favorably in the House from the Committee on Military Affairs, and is pending on the House Calendar. As the considerations which then operated to secure favorable action still prevail, your committee content themselves with reproducing them here:

A consideration applicable to Fort Robinson is found in the report of the Secretary of War for 1882 and a report of General Sherman for that year. The former suggests an abandonment of certain posts, which, because of changes on the frontier, had become useless.

This recommendation having been acted upon, in connection with General Sherman's in 1882 that Fort Robinson be retained, and the military policy of the Government in favor of concentrating troops at strategic points having become fixed and stable, it follows that greater economy, better discipline, and more ample protection will result if that policy is given that sustained and deserved support which prudence, justice, and the cause of humanity dictate.

The primary object of stationing troops at Fort Robinson and at Fort Niobrara is to hold in check 28,000 savage Sioux on the Sioux Reservation in Dakota on the confines of Northern Nebraska. This tribe of hostiles is armed with the deadly Winchester rifle, and its warlike disposition has repeatedly left desolation and massacre in the track of its raids, and trouble therefrom may be again apprehended in spite of the civilizing influences at work to temper its ferocity. This is quite strongly hinted by Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, in a report to the Secretary of War, dated September 19, 1885, the Sioux having previously left their reservation, ostensibly on hunting expeditions, on which occasion there was a hurried concentration of troops from long distances, occupying much time and costing the Government a considerable sum of money.

Within the past five years Northern Nebraska and Southern and Interior Dakota have received such an influx of population that the homes of settlers are found at the very threshold of the Sioux Reservation and surround it on several sides, bringing the white man and the Indian in closer contact—well calculated to increase the danger of outbreaks and the infliction of great loss of life and property in case of a sudden raid.

The situation is well described by General Schofield in his report to the Secretary of War for 1885. He says:

"The great majority of the large frontier population are strangers to the earlier history of the Indian country. They have settled there *since* the Indians were located upon reservations. Relying upon Government protection, they are apparently unconscious of any danger, while in simple truth they are liable *at any moment* to experience all the horrors of Indian warfare."

Considering these facts, the close proximity of the Sioux to dense populations quite unconscious of danger and unprepared for an outbreak, your committee are of the opinion that the present garrison of one hundred and seventy enlisted men at Fort Robinson is too small, and that it should be sufficient to render it probable that the effect of an increased force, as suggested, would be to hold in check any disposition on the part of the Sioux to take the war path.

The buildings at Fort Robinson were temporary in their character, and no repairs thereon have been made for many years, and they are now almost uninhabitable. In this connection the following communication from Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield seems pertinent:

HEADQUARTERS DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, February 9, 1886.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

The fact that the Elkhorn Valley Railroad will pass Fort Laramie at a distance of 45 miles, while Fort Robinson is immediately on that road, greatly diminishes the value of the former and increases that of the latter post. Even if another railroad should hereafter be extended along the valley of the North Platte to and beyond Fort Laramie, Fort Robinson would still remain much the most important station, because of its close proximity to the Sioux Reservation.

Hence I suggest the construction of additional barracks and quarters at Fort Robinson, and a corresponding reduction of the garrison at Fort Laramie. It would manifestly be unwise to expend money in repair of the old buildings at Laramie.

J. M. SCHOFIELD,
Major-General, Commanding.

While the buildings at Fort Niobrara may be large enough to accommodate the present garrison of 256 enlisted men, not unlike those at Fort Robinson, they were constructed of adobe, are not complete, and are out of repair, and there is no doubt that a pressing necessity exists for their completion and for such repairs thereon as shall place them beyond the danger of requiring a much larger outlay on repair account than now exists.

Fort D. A. Russell, in Wyoming Territory, is one of the twenty-five military posts recommended in 1882 by General Sherman to be made "permanent," and constructed of stone or brick, and there would seem to be no doubt of the necessity for the completion of present structures there, and for the suggested expenditure for repairs at that post.

The Lieutenant-General of the Army, in a letter to the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the House, dated March 31, 1886, says:

"With reference to the completion of the barracks and quarters at Fort D. A. Russell, I would invite attention to my remarks of February 17, 1886, on House bill No. 4367, from which I extract as follows:

"Fort D. A. Russell is three miles north of the Union Pacific Railroad and in the suburbs of the city of Cheyenne. It is about midway between Chicago and San Francisco, and is connected by two direct railroads with Denver. It was established in 1867, and since that time has had, and still has, geographical advantages of location which will make it the rendezvous for troops, for equipment and distribution, for a long time. I consider Fort Russell a permanent post."

"Fort Robinson is situated in the northwest corner of Nebraska, very near to the southern limit of the great Sioux Reservation and but a few miles from the extension of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. The nearest military post—Fort Laramie—has now lost much of its military importance, while the location of Fort Robinson will make it a prominent point for many years to come. The concentration of troops and erection of the barracks and quarters necessary for their accommodation is therefore a wise military measure. For these reasons I heartily recommend the enactment of the various measures contemplated by this bill.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

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

Under date of February 25, 1886, the Secretary of War said:

Fort D. A. Russell is three miles north of the Union Pacific Railroad, and in the suburbs of the city of Cheyenne. It is about midway between Chicago and San Francisco, and is connected by two direct railroads with Denver. It was established in 1867, and since that time has had, and still has, geographical advantage of location, which will make it the rendezvous for troops, for equipment and distribution, for a long time. I consider Fort Russell a permanent post. The large military depot is at the edge of the post and connected with the Union Pacific Railroad by a side track. This depot has been of more service during the past 18 years than any other depot in the country. We have held this valuable post until the present time by scanty repairs and patch-work, and now it is necessary to put it in good condition to make it habitable, and the amount asked for will suffice for that purpose.

It was ascertained at the last session, when this subject was under consideration, that to enlarge and complete the quarters and barracks at Fort Robinson for a garrison of ten companies would cost about \$82,000; and to complete those at Fort D. A. Russell would require a smaller sum, and at Fort Niobrara a still smaller sum.

As will appear from a communication from the Lieutenant-General of the Army, hereto annexed marked "A," there was expended at both Fort Russell and Fort Robinson about \$20,000 out of the current appropriations, and hence that a smaller sum for each is now adequate to meet the requirements of the bill and the military necessities of the situation.

Hon. CHAS. F. MANDERSON:

WAR DEPARTMENT, December 21, 1886.

Your telegram received. The proposition to appropriate \$30,000 for Fort Russell and \$55,000 for Fort Robinson meets with my approval; \$20,000 was given to each of these posts out of current appropriations, and the proposed sums are to complete them.

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

These expenditures are urgently desired by the War Department, as will appear from annual reports, and your committee have therefore amended the second section of the bill (H. R. 7192) so as to read :

2. That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized and directed to complete the quarters and barracks at Fort D. A. Russell, in the Territory of Wyoming, at an expense not exceeding \$30,000; and to complete the quarters and barracks at Fort Robinson, in the State of Nebraska, for a garrison of ten companies, at a cost not to exceed \$55,000; and there is hereby appropriated for the purposes mentioned in this section, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$85,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary.

And, as thus amended, your committee recommend the passage of the bill.

