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Brevet rank on officers of the United States Army.

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BREVET RANK ON OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES
ARMY.

JULY 11, 1888.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1323.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to which was referred the bill (S. 1323) to authorize the President to confer brevet rank on officers of the United States Army for gallant services in Indian campaigns, report:

The committee have had the same under consideration, together with the letters of the Adjutant-General of the Army, and the Secretary of War, bearing date May 17 and May 23, respectively (and which are printed herewith as a part of this report), and the committee recommend that said bill be amended so that section 2 shall read as follows, to wit:

SEC. 2. That such brevet commissions as may be issued under the provisions of this act shall bear date from the date of the recommendation thereof by the department commander in each case respectively.

And that as so amended the said bill do pass.

The following are the communications of the Adjutant-General and Secretary of War above referred to.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
May 17, 1888.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to the provisions of Senate bill 1323, relating to brevet promotions, as amended and passed by the Senate yesterday, the 16th instant. The bill, as it passed, authorizes the issue of brevet commissions to officers "recommended for gallant service in action against hostile Indians since January 1, 1867," and provides that these commissions "shall bear date only from the passage of this act," and "that the date of the particular heroic act for which the officer is promoted shall appear in his commission."

It is to be remarked that a great many—probably the greater portion—of the recommendations for these brevets since January 1, 1867, do not give or refer to specific dates on which gallant acts or service was performed; these recommendations were, as a rule, based on gallant or meritorious service in a series of Indian battles, or during an entire campaign, and it is doubtful if there are many, if any, instances in which the conduct of the officers was termed "heroic." It will therefore be impossible, doubtless, in the majority of cases, to fix upon specific dates "of the particular heroic acts," etc., which the bill, as it now stands, requires to be given in the commissions.

Many officers who were ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago recommended for brevets one grade higher than the rank they then held, have since been promoted one or two grades. Hence they would, under the terms of this bill, receive brevet commissions, or "promotion," to a lower grade than that they now hold in the Army, and of a later date.

It is suggested that if this measure is to become a law, the bill should be amended so as to allow more latitude as to the dates to be shown in the commissions as indicating the particular services for which conferred; that is, permitting the date which

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is to be specified in a commission conferred for services in a campaign, or in several battles or actions, to refer approximately to the period during which the services were rendered. It is further suggested that the commissions to be issued upon recommendations made so long ago, when many, if not most, of the officers concerned were serving in lower grades than they now hold, ought to give the brevet rank to date from, at least approximately, the date the services were rendered. It is not believed there would be any objection to this, inasmuch as no additional pay or emoluments are involved, and the anomaly of promoting an officer to a brevet grade lower than his actual grade would be avoided.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, May 23, 1888.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, for your consideration, a letter of the 17th instant from the Adjutant-General, inviting attention to Senate bill 1323, Fiftieth Congress, first session, to authorize the issue of brevet commissions to officers recommended for gallant service in action against hostile Indians since January 1, 1867, which was passed by the Senate on the 16th instant, and suggesting that the bill be amended so as to allow more latitude as to the dates to be shown in the commissions as indicating the particular services for which they are conferred, and that the commissions ought to give the brevet rank to date from the date at which the services were rendered.

The views of the Adjutant-General are concurred in by this Department.

Very respectfully,

WILLIAM C. ENDICOTT,
Secretary of War.

Hon. E. W. TOWNSEND,
Chairman Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives.

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