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Letter from the Secretary of War, relative to an appropriation for the erection of two posts along the Northern Pacific Railroad.

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MILITARY POSTS ON NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD.

L E T T E R

FROM

T H E S E C R E T A R Y O F W A R ,

RELATIVE TO

An appropriation for the erection of two posts along the Northern Pacific Railroad.

FEBRUARY 19, 1873.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 14, 1873.*

The Secretary of War has the honor to report to the House of Representatives, for the information of the Committee on Appropriations, that a telegram has been received from Mr. Cass, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, that the Northern Pacific Railroad Company intend to put their road from the Missouri River to the Yellowstone under contract this spring. The work of construction will commence early in the summer, and he asks for sufficient force, to be stationed along the line of the proposed road. This will require a strong escort and will necessitate the establishment of two large posts between the Missouri River and Fort Ellis.

General Sheridan reports that our expense for barracks and quarters will be greatly increased, and he thinks it advisable to notify Congress of this fact, so that sufficient additional appropriations may be made for the establishment of these two posts. He says: "The posts to be established will be expensive, and I would respectfully recommend that the fund for barracks and quarters be increased, at least in the sum of \$250,000."

General Sherman, to whom this subject was referred, says: "This railroad is a national enterprise, and we are forced to protect the men during its survey and construction, through, probably, the most warlike nation of Indians on this continent, who will fight for every foot of the line. It is a matter of war requiring near two thousand troops, who in winter must be sheltered. General Sheridan's estimate is the lowest possible."

I therefore earnestly recommend the appropriation by Congress of the sum of \$250,000, to be expended in the erection of two posts, the location of which shall be selected by General Sheridan.

I concur with General Sherman in his view that this is a national enterprise and should receive the support of the Government.

It will also prove to be an economical measure and will tend to a solution of the Indian problem in the northwestern territory.

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.