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Military road from Fort Washakie to Snake River, Wyoming.

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MILITARY ROAD FROM FORT WASHAKIE TO SNAKE
RIVER, WYOMING.

MAY 7, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the
Union and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 4445.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4445) entitled "A bill providing for the construction of a military road from Fort Washakie, Wyoming, to the mouth of the Buffalo Fork of the Snake River, near Jacksons Lake, in Uinta County, Wyoming," have considered the same, and would recommend that said bill be amended in line 3 by striking out the word "twenty" and inserting the word "ten," and in line 5 by striking out the word "up" and inserting the words "by the most practicable route near," and that the bill when so amended do pass.

This bill provides for the construction of a military road over the rough and mountainous districts between Fort Washakie, Wyo., and a point near the southern boundary of the Yellowstone National Park. A careful review of the situation satisfied the committee that the construction of this road is imperatively demanded by the military situation in the region over which it traverses. Immediately south of the Yellowstone National Park is a region of country which for many years has been the hunting ground of the Indians from the Shoshone Reservation at Fort Washakie, Wyo. These Indians pass into this country over a trail approximately traversing the region over which it is proposed to construct the road. There has been a considerable amount of friction in the past developed in this region between the settlers and Indians over the hunting privilege, notably the troubles of the summer of 1895.

While it is hoped that an understanding will be reached at an early date as to the hunting rights of the Indians in this region, there will continue to be much friction between the whites and Indians for some time to come, and the nearest troops to the region where the troubles are likely to occur are those stationed at Fort Washakie. Even though in case of Indian troubles in that region troops were brought from other points, the road would be needed over which to traverse the country in case the Indians scattered and went toward the settlements. This road would also be valuable to the Government for general military purposes in time to come, as it connects the permanent Shoshone Indian Reservation in Wyoming and the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho, and the National Park Reservation, and will be the only direct means of communication between these points.

Brig. Gen. J. J. Coppinger, commanding the Department of the Platte, makes the following statement in regard to the proposed road:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
Omaha, Nebr., February 10, 1896.

Respectfully returned to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

I am of the opinion that a good wagon road connecting Fort Washakie by a nearly straight line with the eastern entrance to the Jackson Hole country, and thence to the junction of the Buffalo Fork with the Snake River, would be of value for military purposes.

So long as the Indians of the Fort Hall and Wind River reservations do not surrender the hunting privilege accorded them by treaty there will be danger of conflicts between them and lawless whites in the Hole which the cavalry at Fort Washakie would be in the best position to put down.

Even if the Indians relinquish this privilege, the troops might still have to police the hunting grounds to prevent encroachments thereon by the young bucks, naturally reluctant to forego their annual sport.

The sum appropriated by the bill ought to be sufficient, if expended under the direction of the War Department, for the construction of a good road between the points mentioned, including any bridging of streams necessary.

In order that the Department may be left free to select the most practicable route, it is suggested that the bill be amended.

J. J. COPPINGER,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles concurs in the recommendations and views of General Coppinger as follows:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., February 21, 1896.

SIR: Referring to House bill No. 4445, entitled "A bill providing for the construction of a military road from Fort Washakie, Wyo., to the mouth of the Buffalo Fork of Snake River, near Jacksons Lake, in Uinta County, Wyo.," referred to me for report, I have the honor to submit the following:

I concur with Brigadier-General Coppinger, commanding the Department of the Platte, in the following:

* * * * *

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

NELSON A. MILES,
Major-General, Commanding.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

