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Mounted rangers (to accompany bill H. R. no. 546).

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MOUNTED RANGERS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 646.]

DECEMBER 28, 1882.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSON, from the Committee of Military Affairs, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred so much of the Secretary of War's report as relates to converting the corps of mounted rangers into a regiment of dragoons, report:

That, upon an examination of the organization of the present battalion of mounted rangers, it does appear to the committee to be very defective. The companies are too large for men serving on horseback, and differ too materially from the organization of the other troops composing the army, there being in each company of rangers one hundred and ten men, exclusive of officers, which, when drawn into line, will make a very considerable front, nearly equal to that of a squadron of cavalry. There is but one field officer, and he a major, unprovided with any staff, to command six hundred and sixty men; while, in a regiment of infantry, where the duties cannot be so arduous, and the regiment composed only of 514 men, it has been deemed necessary to provide three field officers and an adjutant, and certain non-commissioned staff, with a due proportion of music, none of which are provided for the rangers.

The regiment of dragoons, which it is proposed by the Secretary of War to substitute for the battalion of rangers, will not cost so much for its maintenance as that of the rangers, by \$153,932 a year, as it will appear by his estimate accompanying his report. It must be evident from the constitution of the corps of rangers, and from the short period of their service, their efficiency will be but little superior to that of the ordinary militia: every year there must be a loss of time in reorganizing and recruiting the corps, and in the acquisition of the necessary experience and knowledge. Besides, it cannot be expected that their equipments and horses will be equal to those furnished by the public.

Regular dragoons, it is believed, are fully competent to discharge all the duties that can be required of mounted rangers. In celerity of movement, they will of course be equal, and as it is the duty of dragoons to serve on horse or foot, they may be trained to the use of the rifle and sword, as occasion may require. Besides these important objects, it is desirable to

preserve in our military system the elements of cavalry tactics, and to keep pace with the improvements made in them by other nations. The addition of a regiment of dragoons to our present military establishment would make it much more complete, and would introduce a force which would harmonize with, and participate in, the *esprit du corps*, so essential to military efficiency, and so easily and certainly created by military principles.

A corps of this kind has long been wanted, and it is now generally conceded that mounted troops are absolutely necessary for that part of the inland frontier in contact with the Indians. In addition to our fixed military posts, garrisoned by infantry, the means of protecting the frontier, should such a corps of cavalry, as here recommended, be raised, would be ample and complete. The committee impressed with the importance of there being attached to the military establishment a regiment of dragoons, reports a bill for that purpose.

REPORT

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred a bill of the Secretary of War, to amend an act in relation to the organization of a regiment of dragoons, report:

That, upon an examination of the organization of the present battalion of mounted rangers, it does appear to the committee to be very defective. The companies are too large, the men serving on horseback, and differ materially from the organization of the other troops composing the army, there being in each company of rangers one hundred and ten men, exclusive of officers, which, when drawn into line, will make a very considerable front, nearly equal to that of a regiment of cavalry. There is but one field officer, and he a major, unqualified with any skill, to command six hundred and fifty men; while, in a regiment of cavalry, where the duties cannot be so arduous, and the regimen composed only of six hundred, it has been deemed necessary to provide three field officers and an adjutant, and certain unmounted men, with a less proportion of horses, some of which are provided for the transport.

The regiment of dragoons, which is proposed by the Secretary of War, is considered for the battalion of rangers, will not cost so much for its maintenance as that of the rangers, by \$105,000 a year, as it will appear by the estimate accompanying the report. It must be evident from the comparison of the cost of rangers and from the short period of their service, that rangers will be but little superior to that of the ordinary militia, and that they must be a loss of time in retraining and reuniting the corps, and in the acquisition of the necessary experience and knowledge. It is not to be expected that their experiments and injuries will be equal to those sustained by the public.

Light dragoons, it is believed, are fully competent to discharge all the duties that can be expected of mounted rangers. In cavalry of course they will be equal, and as it is the duty of dragoons to fight on horse or foot, they may be trained to the use of the rifle and sword in addition to their regular arms. Besides these important objects, it is desirable