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BIG THREE RAILROAD COMPANY.

JANUARY 24, 1899.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. LITTLE, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 11409.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred House bill 11409, have considered the same and report the bill back with the recommendation that it pass with the amendments indicated in the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 19, 1899.

SIR: In compliance with your request of the 11th, inclosing H. R. 11409, being "A bill to entitle and authorize the Big Three Railroad Company to construct, own, and operate a main and branch of railway in Indian and Oklahoma Territories," said bill was referred on the 12th instant to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for consideration, report, and recommendation.

I am now in receipt of his report, dated the 17th instant, recommending that said bill be amended in certain particulars specifically stated therein, and if the same be amended as suggested, then that there is no objection to its passage.

The Department concurs in the recommendation of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and a copy of his report is herewith inclosed for the information of your committee.

Very respectfully,

C. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

Hon. JAMES S. SHERMAN,
Chairman of Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, January 17, 1899.

SIR: The office acknowledges receipt, by Department reference of the 12th instant, for consideration, early report, and recommendation, of a communication from Hon. James S. Sherman, chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives, dated January 11, 1899, in which he incloses for report by this Department H. R. 11409, "A bill to entitle and authorize the Big Three Railroad Company to construct, own, and operate a main and branch of railway in Indian and Oklahoma

Territories." Mr. Sherman requests a report from this Department relative to the expediency of the passage of said bill.

Said bill grants the Big Three Railroad Company right of way for a railway, telegraph, and telephone line through the Indian and Oklahoma Territories "beginning at a point to be selected by said railway company at or near the west line of Little River County, Arkansas, and running thence over the most practicable and feasible route through the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole nations, Indian Territory; thence through the Territory of Oklahoma to Oklahoma City and Guthrie, in said Territory, with branch line to begin at or near the line of Oklahoma and Indian Territories and running south through Oklahoma and Indian Territories to Sherman, Texas."

Reporting thereon, you are advised that, with a few minor exceptions, the bill substantially conforms to the many recent acts of Congress granting railway companies rights of way through the Indian and Oklahoma Territories. These exceptions will be spoken of seriatim.

In line 2, on page 2, after the word "with" and before the word "branch," insert the word "a."

In lines 2 and 3, on page 5, strike out the words "in district court in Indian Territory or Oklahoma Territory" and insert in lieu thereof the words "the United States district court for the district in which the occupant resides."

In lines 12 and 13, on page 5, strike out the words "claiming damages" and insert in lieu thereof the words "taking the appeal."

In line 18, on page 7, strike out the word "fifteen" and insert in lieu thereof the word "twenty-five."

It will be observed that this changes the amount of annual tax from \$15 per mile to \$25 per mile. This increase is thought to be justified by the development of the country since said rate was first established, some fifteen years ago, and even the increased rate suggested by this office is small in comparison with the rates generally paid by railroad companies through many of the States.

In line 7, on page 10, strike out the word "no" and insert in lieu thereof the word "all."

If the bill shall be amended as herein suggested, this office sees no objection to its passage, and so reports.

Mr. Sherman's letter and the bill are returned herewith; also copy of this report is inclosed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. A. JONES, *Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

