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RIGHT OF WAY THROUGH CERTAIN LANDS IN THE FORMER NEZ PERCES RESERVATION.

JANUARY 24, 1899.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CURTIS, of Kansas, from the Committee on Indian Affairs,
submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 11685.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs having had under consideration the bill (H. R. 11685) granting the right of way through certain lands in the former Nez Perces Indian Reservation in the State of Idaho, report the same favorably and recommend its passage.

The opening of the original Nez Perces Indian Reservation has been followed by settlement of several thousand white settlers upon the lands thus restored, and, although the country has heretofore been remote from railroads, such extensive settlements have now stimulated active railroad construction to such extent that the committee believes that the bill as introduced and reported, in granting permission to all railroad companies desiring to construct roads through the diminished agency reservations and the lands of individual allottees, is in the public interest rather than the passage of special bills for particular corporations.

This bill requires the maps of route to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and the compensation to be paid for such right of way to such Indian allottees must also be fixed by that official. In this instance the committee believes that the compensation to be paid as required by the Secretary would exceed what would be allowed by a local court, and without expense to the Indians. One railroad is now built to the line of these lands and must go through the present season to enable the settlers to plant and harvest much larger crops, which can be carried out for them by rail during the coming fall, whereas they are now required, in some instances, to haul their farm products 60 miles or more over mountain roads.