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Oregon Volunteers

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Recommended Citation

S. Rep. No. 37, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess. (1870)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 15, 1870.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. SCHURZ made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany bill S. No. 53.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred Senate bill No. 53, entitled "A bill to pay two companies of Oregon volunteers," beg leave to present the following report:

It appears that in the summer of 1854, when the emigrant trains began to arrive in Oregon Territory from the East, bloody outrages were committed by Indians on the emigrant routes, and that the military forces of the United States stationed on the Pacific coast were insufficient to afford the necessary protection.

Major Rains, commanding Fort Dalles, reported to General Wool, commanding the department of the Pacific, that on August 20, at Boise River, the Indians had attacked an emigrant train, killing eight men and carrying away four women and five children as captives; that Brevet Major Haller, with two other officers and twenty-six soldiers, had been dispatched to the scene of the massacre; that a volunteer company of thirty-seven men had offered, been accepted, and furnished with arms, horses, ammunition, and rations, and had been sent to the field on August 31. From Major Haller's field-return of September 30, it appears that this volunteer company, under Captain Olney, joined him at Butter Creek on September 3, and thenceforward formed part of Major Haller's battalion, and co-operated with him in his operations under his command until discharged.

Another company of volunteers was called out by the governor of the Territory of Oregon, through Colonel E. Ross, commanding Ninth regiment Oregon militia, to operate on the southern road for the protection of the immigration. This company, commanded by Captain Jesse Walker, remained in the field about three months. The necessities of the case, the manner in which the volunteers were called out, and the meritorious services rendered by them, are fully set forth in H. Mis. Doc. 47, thirty-fifth Congress, second session.

In neither case were the volunteers called into service by the authorities of the United States. Captain Olney's company was indeed "accepted," armed and equipped and incorporated in a battalion by a military officer of the United States. There is no evidence that Captain Jesse Walker's company entered into any similar relations with United States authorities. It is only mentioned in a letter addressed by General Wool to the War Department, dated at San Francisco, September 14, 1854, as "a company of volunteers having been mustered into service by the authority of the governor of Oregon." But it appears from the testimony before the committee, and mainly set forth in the con-

gressional document above mentioned, that the services performed these volunteers were necessary, and should have been performed United States troops, had the military forces of the United States on Pacific coast been sufficient in numbers. Of this insufficiency a complaint was made by the commander of the department specific to the War Department, but these complaints brought the relief. the reason that the government had no troops at its disposal to meet the exigencies of the case.

The committee, therefore, recommend the passage of the bill, amended as to strictly confine its operation to the two companies above mentioned.