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Report : Mr. Pratt

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S. Rep. No. 498, 43rd Cong., 2nd Sess. (1875)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 6, 1875.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. PRATT submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 888.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 888) directing that the name of James Brown, of Oregon, be placed on the pension-roll, submit the following report:

The bill asserts that James Brown was a teamster in the escort of Government officers to California in the year 1849. The letters filed with the bill constitute the only proofs in the case, and they show that he was one of the party that escorted General John Wilson, sent to San Francisco, as navy agent, and Neal Johnson, Indian agent, in the year 1849, and that he lost his arm on the trip at the crossing of Pitt River by the accidental discharge of a gun. The letter of Mr. Wilson says that Brown was in the service of the United States as part of a detachment of troops which, by orders of the Government, escorted them as navy and Indian agents to California; that he was competent and faithful, and that he lost his arm in this service, but in what manner, and through whose fault, neither he nor any of the other letter-writers show. Another writer says he has found him to be a faithful and efficient messenger and expressman. Still another describes him to be a perfect gentleman.

Assuming that these letters can be received as evidence, and that they express the whole truth, it will be seen at once they lay no ground for a pension. If he was in the employ of the Government, it was probably as a civilian, for no reference is made to any enlistment, and as a civilian merely he cannot be pensioned. Whether or not his carelessness contributed to his accident we are not informed. Why, if his case was a proper one for a pension, he should have deferred making application for twenty-four years is inexplicable, or, at least, is unexplained. If his case is any better than the papers put on file make it, it is his own fault, for certainly he has had ample time since 1849 to make it strong. The committee recommend that the bill be indefinitely postponed.