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Military Wagon-Road in Nebraska

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 19, 1875.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. KELLY submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 995.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 995) for the construction of a military wagon-road from Sidney, Nebr., to the posts at the Red Cloud and Spotted-Tail agencies, having had the same under consideration, report as follows:

It appears that the old route from Cheyenne, on the Union Pacific Railroad, to the Red Cloud and Spotted-Tail agencies, is two hundred and twenty miles in length; while, by the new one from Sidney to the same agencies, it is only one hundred and twenty-five miles, a saving, in distance, of ninety-five miles. There exists, however, a serious difficulty on the new road in crossing the streams, which can only be obviated by the construction of bridges over them, particularly over the North Platte and the Niobrara. The letter of General E. O. C. Ord, commanding general of the Department of the Platte, to Senator Hitchcock, dated January 4, 1875, hereto annexed, shows the importance of having bridges built over these rivers and over other streams on the way.

For the reasons set forth in that letter, the committee recommend the passage of the bill.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
Omaha, Nebr., December 19, 1874.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 15th instant, inclosing a bill for the construction of a wagon-road from the Union Pacific Railroad, at Sidney, to the Red Cloud and Spotted-Tail agencies, with the necessary bridges, is just received. I caused this route to be surveyed and measured by an officer last summer, and now all supplies, carried by contract, for the troops stationed at those agencies, are sent that way, which reduces the distances from the railroad to Red Cloud to one hundred and twenty-five (125) miles.

I have been informed recently that the Indian Department now pays for transporting its supplies for the agencies, via Cheyenne, at the rate of — cents per mile, over a route of more than two hundred and twenty (220) miles.

The only serious difficulty encountered on the new road is the crossing of the streams, at least three of which will require bridges, to prevent delay at all times, and, in time of high water, to enable teams to cross at all. One of these bridges will be over the North Platte, where it is more than half a mile wide. In my annual report, I called attention to the importance of a bridge at this point.

Bearing in mind the long bridge over the Platte, and the bridge over the Niobrara, also a considerable stream, I do not think one hundred thousand dollars too large an appropriation.

Red Cloud and other prominent chiefs have expressed themselves strongly in favor

of having this road opened and their supplies sent that way instead of by the long round-about, via either Cheyenne or the Missouri River. The opening of the road will tap a valuable timber-region on the Niobrara, and will facilitate the extinguishment of the Indian title to that portion of Nebraska north of the Platte.

The report of the officer who surveyed the road, with my remarks thereon, was forwarded to the Secretary of War, and a copy may have been sent to the Indian Department, as it contained matters of interest to that Department. If you desire it, I can send you a copy of the report referred to.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. O. C. ORD,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

Hon. P. W. HITCHCOCK,

U. S. Senator from Nebraska, Washington, D. C.
(Through the Secretary of War.)