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Mount Vernon Military Reservation

53D CONGRESS, 3d Session. } SENATE. { REPORT No. 971.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 21, 1895.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. BATE, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 8680.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8680) granting the Mount Vernon Military Reservation to the State of Alabama for public uses, having considered the same, adopt the report of the House committee, No. 1819, Fifty-third Congress, third session, which report is herewith appended and made a part of this report, and recommend the passage of the bill.

[House Report No. 1819, Fifty-third Congress, third session.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8680) entitled "A bill granting the Mount Vernon Barracks Military Reservation to the State of Alabama for public uses," have had the same under consideration, and submit the following report:

Said military reservation is situate in the State of Alabama, near the Mobile River, about 28 miles northeast of the city of Mobile, and not near any village or town, so that its location is isolated. It was set apart in 1830 from the public lands for military purposes, and was immediately occupied as a United States arsenal. In 1873 it was transferred to the Quartermaster's Department for use as barracks for troops, and was so occupied up to November, 1894.

For several years the Apache Indian prisoners of war were confined there, but they were removed in the fall of 1894, and in November of that year the garrison was withdrawn and the post permanently abandoned.

It embraces about 1,600 acres of sterile land, which supports a sparse growth of timber, and is of very little value.

The improvements upon it are suitable for battalion barracks, and are very good of their kind, but unfit for any other than some public use, so that the land can not very well revert to the public domain for ordinary entry, nor can it be sold at more than a nominal price.

While the Government has not and probably will not have any possible use for the property, it must if it retains it maintain a guard there and incur very considerable expense in keeping the buildings and other improvements in repair, or else they will rapidly go to decay and ruin.

The legislature of Alabama, on the 8th of December, 1894, adopted a joint resolution asking the cession of this property to the State for public uses. The bill has been submitted by the committee to the War Department, and the Secretary of War, in a written communication to the committee, states that the property is of no use to the Government and recommends the passage of the bill.

There are many precedents for such a disposition of an abandoned military reservation. Among others within late years are the grant of a part of the abandoned mili-

tary reservation at Fort Smith, Ark., to the city of Fort Smith, by act of May 13, 1884; of the Baton Rouge Reservation to a religious denomination, by act of September 30, 1890; of a part of the Fort Sisseton Reservation to the State of South Dakota, by act of October 1, 1890; of a part of the Fort Randall Reservation to the State of Nebraska, by act of March 3, 1893, and of a part of the Fort Randall Reservation to the State of South Dakota, by act of March 3, 1893.

The only condition that Congress has imposed in such cases is that the State or municipality to which the donation is made shall use the same for public purposes.

The grant has been sought by the State on that express condition, and the bill so provides and guards the cession. The committee unanimously recommend the passage of the bill.