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PENSIONS TO SURVIVORS OF MEXICAN AND INDIAN
 WARS AND THEIR WIDOWS.

JANUARY 26, 1897.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of
 the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. STALLINGS, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the
 following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 4318.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4318) granting increase of pension to survivors of the Mexican and Indian wars and to their widows, have considered the same and report as follows:

The soldiers and widows who will be benefited if this bill is enacted into law are all of advanced age, and with very few exceptions they are in needy and dependent circumstances.

It is true that under the provisions of an act of Congress approved January 5, 1893, those Mexican war soldiers who are wholly disabled for manual labor and are in a condition of destitution are entitled to an increase of their pensions to \$12 per month, but by reason of the pauper clause many old veterans have been too proud to apply, and the act has been construed by the pension officials as not applying to widows. The act referred to did not include Indian war pensioners.

Your committee deem it unnecessary to recite the great and enduring services rendered by these old soldiers, as their achievements are an important part of the history of our country. The question now to consider is whether the modest sum of \$12 per month is an excessive pension for this small and rapidly decreasing class, and your committee are unanimously of the opinion that justice and equity fully sanction such an allowance.

The following report from the Commissioner of Pensions shows approximately the additional expenditure the passage of the bill would entail:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF PENSIONS,
 Washington, D. C., May 20, 1896.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 19th instant, submitting a copy of House bill No. 4318, which proposes to increase from \$8 to \$12 per month the pensions of all survivors of the Mexican war and Indian wars, as well as of the widows of those who served in said wars, from and after the passage of said act; and in which you also ask for an estimate of the probable cost to the Government should this bill be favorably acted upon.

In response, I have to state that on the 30th day of April, 1896, there were on the pension rolls the following pensioners:

| | Mexican war. | Indian wars. |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Survivors..... | 11,988 | 2,776 |
| Widows..... | 7,988 | 4,210 |
| Total..... | 19,976 | 6,986 |

On the same date there were pending in this Bureau claims as follows:

| | Mexican war. | Indian wars. |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Survivors..... | 437 | 108 |
| Widows..... | 937 | 790 |
| Total | 1,374 | 898 |

Of the 11,988 persons pensioned as survivors of the Mexican war the records of this Bureau indicate that 4,303 are receiving \$12 per month, so that they will not be affected by this legislation. There remain, therefore, 7,685 persons pensioned as such survivors who are receiving \$8 per month. Adding to this number the 7,988 widows of the Mexican war, there results 15,673 Mexican war pensioners who will be favorably affected by the passage of this proposed bill.

As all survivors and widows of the Indian wars now on the pension rolls are receiving \$8 per month (with but inconsiderable exceptions), the whole number of such pensioners (6,986) will be increased to \$12 per month by said bill.

It has been heretofore estimated—and this Bureau sees no reason to question the accuracy of the estimate—that of applications for pensions on account of Mexican war service four-fifths of those claiming as survivors are allowed and three-fourths of those claiming as widows are allowed. There would thus result 348 applications of survivors and 702 applications of widows of the cases now pending, which will probably be favorably considered by this Bureau, or a total of 1,050 cases.

Of the applications for pensions under the Indian wars act it has been estimated that two-thirds of those claiming as survivors and three-fifths of those claiming as widows receive favorable consideration. It thus results in 72 applications of survivors of Indian wars and 474 applications of widows of Indian wars, or a total of 546 applications under the Indian wars act, which will probably be favorably considered by this Bureau.

The proposed legislation will therefore favorably affect the following persons:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Mexican war pensioners..... | 15,673 |
| Indian war pensioners | 6,986 |
| Mexican war applicants..... | 1,050 |
| Indian war applicants | 546 |
| Total | 24,255 |

As the net additional value will be \$48 in each case there will result a net additional annual cost to the Government, should the proposed bill become a law, of \$1,164,244.

The papers which accompanied your letter are returned herewith.

Very respectfully,

D. I. MURPHY,
First Deputy Commissioner

Hon. H. C. LOUDENSLAGER,
Chairman Committee on Pensions, House of Representatives.

In order that the increased rating for widows carried by the bill shall be subject to the same restrictions and limitations imposed by the general pension laws upon widows of private soldiers and noncommissioned officers of the war of the rebellion, the following amendment is recommended:

At the end of the bill add the following proviso: "Provided, That no widow who was not married to the deceased soldier or sailor prior to March nineteenth, eighteen hundred and eighty-six, shall be entitled to the benefits of this act;" and it is further recommended that as so amended the bill do pass.