

SURVEYOR'S OFFICE—WEST OF LAKE MICHIGAN.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 474.]

MARCH 24, 1836.

Mr. CASEY, from the Committee on the Public Lands, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on the Public Lands, to which the subject of the establishment of a surveyor general's office for that part of the Territory of Michigan which lies west of Lake Michigan, have had the same under consideration, and make the following report :

The subject of the establishment of this office was brought to the attention of the committee by a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 13th of February ultimo, and subsequently by a petition from the people of the county of Desmoine, in the Territory of Michigan, west of the Mississippi river, both which are hereto attached, marked A and B, and made a part of this report.

The committee, in order to become as fully enlightened on this subject as possible, addressed a note to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, and received from him the communication marked D, with the map, which are hereto attached, and also made a part of this report.

The vast extent of country lying between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, which has been ceded to the United States by the Indians, the richness of the soil, not surpassed by any under the sun, and the rapidity with which it is being settled, at once convince the committee of the propriety of the survey of the same, and consequently the establishment of an office for that purpose.

The quantity of land between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers which has been ceded to the United States by the Indians, is estimated at upwards of 21,328,000 acres. Of this 7,200,000 acres, lying immediately north of the State of Missouri, and along the west bank of the Mississippi, is comprised the counties of Dubuque and Desmoine, containing already a population of some twelve or thirteen thousand souls, and increasing in numbers with a rapidity never surpassed in any country before, and from which the Indians have emigrated. West of this tract is an immense country, containing something like 14,576,000 acres of land which is not yet ceded to the United States, and occupied by Indians, but which they are extremely anxious to cede, because of the scarcity of game within the same. This too is a country rich as any other in soil, of salubrious climate, beautifully watered, and intended as the home of the white man. In addition to this is the great extent of country between the Mississippi river and Green bay,

lying north of the Wisconsin river. It is at present occupied by Winnebago and other tribes of Indians, who are also anxious to remove from the same, and which must very soon receive the attention of the Government, be surveyed and sold.

That part of the country which composes the counties of Iowa, Brown, and Milwaukee, a greater portion of which has been surveyed, is attached to the office of the surveyor general of Ohio. The plats of survey, records, &c. are of course in his office, and the people of those counties are put to great inconvenience and expense in procuring them when needed in the courts of justice, or otherwise, it being from eight to twelve hundred miles distant from the county to the office at Cincinnati. The whole of the country west of the Mississippi is as yet attached to no surveyor's district, and is too far distant from any one already established to derive advantage therefrom.

This valuable and extensive country west of the Mississippi and north of the Wisconsin rivers, to which the committee have adverted, has not yet received from the Government any attention to the survey of the same; and the committee, being deeply impressed with the conviction of the necessity thereof, report herewith a bill for that object.

A.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *February 13, 1836.*

On motion of Mr. JONES, of Michigan,

Resolved, That the Committee on the Public Lands be instructed to inquire into the expediency of establishing a surveyor general's office west of Lake Michigan, in the Territory of Michigan; and that the committee also inquire into the expediency of authorizing the survey and sale of the lands purchased from the Sac and Fox Indians, at the treaty concluded at Rock island, on the 21st day of September, A. D. 1832, and that appropriation be made for the above objects.

Attest:

W. S. FRANKLIN, *Clerk,*
By B. B. FRENCH.

B.

To the honorable the Congress of the United States:

Your petitioners, citizens of the town of Burlington, in the county of Desmoine, in that part of the Territory of Michigan which lies on the west side of the Mississippi river,

SHWETH:

That the unexampled rapidity with which that district of county lately purchased of the Sac and Fox Indians is populating, requires that your

honorably should establish a surveyor general's office in the said town of Burlington. Was said purchase surveyed it would all be purchased of Government immediately. And it is not only the present lands of Government that will justify the establishing of an office of the kind mentioned, but there lies west of the late purchase an almost unbounded extent of very valuable country which to the Indians is of but little value in consequence of there being but little game. They inform us already that they wish a purchase to be made by the Government. So rapidly, indeed, has this purchase increased in population that there scarcely, between the Mississippi river and the purchase line, remains a good farming situation that is unoccupied; and this is not only back of the flourishing town of Burlington, but from the lower end of the purchase one hundred and fifty miles upwards. Your petitioners are confident that there is no point other than the one mentioned which furnish so good grounds for the establishing of said office. They, your petitioners, therefore, earnestly pray that a surveyor general's office may be established at Burlington, Desmoine county, Michigan Territory.

January 19, 1836.

[Signed by 191 persons.]

D.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
March 11, 1836.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th ultimo, wherein you mention "that the Committee on the Public Lands have under consideration the expediency of establishing a surveyor general's office in that part of the Territory of Michigan which lies west of the lake," and which subject, you intimate, has been presented to the attention of the committee by petitions and memorials from the people of the Territory and the Legislative Council.

You further remark, that "a mere glance at the map of the vast extent of unsurveyed land west of Lake Michigan and the Mississippi river, and the great distance of the country from the surveyor's office at Cincinnati, Ohio, in which the business of this section is transacted, induce the committee at once to feel favorably disposed towards the establishment of this office."

In conformity to the wish of the committee to have my opinion on this subject, which you are pleased to communicate in the concluding paragraph of your letter, I have to inform you, that it affords me pleasure to express, in coincidence with what appears to be the views of the committee in this matter, my decided conviction that the public interest requires the creation of a surveyor general's office for the region of country described in your letter.

I have to remark, however, that a great portion of the ceded territory west of Lake Michigan, which now constitutes the districts of Ouisconsin and Green Bay, bounded south by the northern line of the State of Illinois, north and west by the Ouisconsin and Fox rivers, has been surveyed and offered for sale, and that contracts have been entered into by the surveyor

general at Cincinnati, for the surveying of the residuary portion; and which contracts, together with all the subsequent office work necessarily incident thereto, it is every way desirable and proper should be consummated at Cincinnati, whence should emanate the official evidences of survey necessary to bringing the residue of said lands into market.

I would therefore respectfully intimate my opinion, that the proposed bill should provide for a surveyor general's office, to be located at a suitable point, to take jurisdiction (until further and additional provision of law) over the surveying of *all* public lands lying north of the State of Missouri, west of the Mississippi river, and north of the Ouisconsin and Fox rivers, in the Territory of Michigan; and that whenever, in his opinion, the President of the United States shall deem it important to the public service so to do, he shall be empowered and directed to cause to be transferred to the office of the surveyor general for such new district, all maps, field notes, documents, books and papers, now in the surveyor general's office at Cincinnati, appertaining to the surveys of that portion of the country west of Lake Michigan, and now forming the Ouisconsin and Green Bay land districts, in virtue of the provisions of the act of Congress, approved on the 26th June, 1834, entitled "An act to create additional land districts in the States of Illinois and Missouri, and in the Territory north of the State of Illinois."

Herewith transmitted is a sketch map, exhibiting the region of country referred to.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Sir, your obedient servant,

ETHAN A. BROWN,

Commissioner.

Hon. ZADOK CASEY,

of the Committee on the Public Lands.