

JAIL AT VAN BUREN, ARKANSAS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 117.]

APRIL, 17, 1856.

Mr. S. W. HARRIS, from the Committee on the Judiciary, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on the Judiciary, to whom was referred a bill to be entitled "An act to build a jail at the town of Van Buren, in the State of Arkansas," have had the same under consideration, and report:

That, relying upon the statements contained in the letter of the Hon. A. B. Greenwood, a representative from the State of Arkansas, and which is hereto appended, (marked A,) your committee consider that justice and public policy alike recommend the appropriation of the sum of money asked for in said bill, for the purposes therein indicated.

They accordingly report the said bill back, with a recommendation that it do pass.

A.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,
March 4, 1856.

SIR: In compliance with your request, I proceed to give you the reasons for introducing the bill appropriating a sum of money to enlarge the jail at the city of Van Buren, Arkansas. You are aware that the State has been divided into two judicial districts. The court for the western district is holden at Van Buren, Crawford county, within a few miles of the Indian territory. The county has a large and safe public prison, the free use of which is given to the United States. This prison, although large and commodious, is wholly insufficient to contain the State and government prisoners. There are frequently from twenty-five to forty prisoners in that jail, a large portion of whom are triable before the district court. The consequence is, that the prison is so crowded that they are dying every week. Humanity would require that the prison should be enlarged;

and it cannot be expected that the county would willingly incur this additional expense.

The reason for this increase of United States prisoners is found in the fact, that, until the State was divided into two districts, violations of the intercourse law were rarely punished. There are innumerable violations of this law daily occurring in the Indian nation attached to that district. The usual certainty now of the punishment inflicted by the courts, has done much to put down the practice of introducing liquors in the Nation west of Arkansas. When the court was only holden at Little Rock, it was difficult to get witnesses before the court, on account of the distance they were compelled to travel, which was obviated by forming another district.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. B. GREENWOOD.

Hon. S. W. HARRIS,

House of Representatives.