

DEFENCE OF NEBRASKA FRONTIER SETTLEMENTS.

JUNE 23, 1856.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. FAULKNER, from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the joint resolution of the legislature of Nebraska Territory, praying an appropriation to defray the expenses incurred in defence of the frontier settlements against the Indians, &c., respectfully report:

That whilst the appropriation asked for may be a proper demand against the government, and no disposition is felt or intended to disparage its allowance in future, yet as no sufficient evidence is afforded of the necessity of the employment of the volunteers, the amount of appropriation necessary to pay them, the number of volunteers called out, or the duration of their service, the committee feel constrained to ask the House to discharge them from the further consideration of the subject.

The committee herewith append the only papers on file in the War Department relating to the subject.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, OMAHA CITY,
Nebraska Territory, July 3, 1855.

SIR: I regret exceedingly that it has become necessary for me to call your attention to the unsettled state of affairs in this Territory. Everything has been thrown into the utmost state of confusion here, and unless prompt measures are taken upon the part of the government for the protection of the frontier settlements their abandonment is inevitable. In view of this fact, I would respectfully suggest that a temporary line of posts be established, commencing at a suitable point on the Missouri and extending along the western boundary of the ceded Territory to the Platte river, which, when done, would effectually protect our frontier settlements against depredations to which they are at present exposed. For a statement of facts as they actually exist, I refer you to the enclosed sheet. While writing the above I have had the displeasure of seeing several good citizens, together with their families, wagons and teams, leaving the Territory for the purpose of seeking homes in the States, and this is not all, others

have already gone, and unless confidence can be speedily restored the principal settlements in the Territory must necessarily be broken up. I therefore hope that you will deem the matter of sufficient importance to cause prompt steps to be taken in the premises.

Very truly yours,

MARK W. IZARD.

Hon. JEFFERSON DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, August 23, 1855.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3d ultimo, calling attention to the aggressions recently committed by the Indians in Nebraska Territory.

A copy of your communication will be forwarded to Brevet Brigadier General Harney, commanding the Sioux expedition, who, it is hoped, will soon have an adequate force at his disposal to give protection to the section of the country to which you refer.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JEFF'N DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

To his Excellency M. W. IZARD,
Governor of Nebraska Territory, Omaha city, N. T.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, OMAHA CITY,
Nebraska, September 15, 1855.

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23d ultimo.

I am much gratified to learn that measures are being taken for the security and protection of our western settlements. I hope that General Harney will find it in his power to act at once, as confidence must be restored or the progress of our settlements will be greatly retarded, if not entirely stopped.

In the meantime I shall be compelled to occupy the line of defence with an adequate force of volunteers; I am aware that in this I am assuming a heavy responsibility, but I confidently believe that the government will sustain me, and promptly make provision to defray all necessary expenses. If, however, I should be mistaken in this, my position will be anything but desirable. General Thayer and myself, in order to meet the emergency, were compelled to make ourselves personally responsible for all expenses, and should the government fail to make the necessary provisions we will, of course, have to foot the bills. From a thorough conviction that the emergency of the case will fully justify the action I have taken in the premises, I feel assured

that all will be right; I should feel much relieved, however, to have your opinion on the subject.

I am, sir, very truly yours,

MARK W. IZARD.

HON. JEFFERSON DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, October 3, 1855.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th ultimo, advising of your having called out volunteers for the defence of the western settlements of Nebraska, the expenses of which General Thayer and yourself have become individually responsible for, and asking my opinion whether the government will make provision to relieve you of them.

In reply I have to say that, having no knowledge of the circumstances under which the troops were called out, or the necessity for it, I am unable to express an opinion on the subject.

This department having no funds applicable to the object, Congress alone can relieve you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JEFF'N DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

His Excellency M. W. IZARD,
Governor of Nebraska, Omaha city.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, OMAHA CITY,
Nebraska Territory, September 22, 1855.

SIR: I am this moment in receipt of a letter from Brevet Brigadier General Harney, of the 27th ultimo, advising me that it is not in his power to do anything towards the protection of the Nebraska frontier, alleging as a reason that the disposable force now under his command is too small to effect the objects of the expedition placed under his charge; he informs me, however, that he has forwarded a copy of my communication of the 10th ultimo, addressed to him on the subject of the recent Indian outrages, to the headquarters of the army, with a recommendation that troops be immediately sent from Fort Leavenworth for the protection of this frontier, which recommendation I hope will be promptly responded to, and that Colonel Sumner's regiment, which, I understand, is very nearly or quite complete, will be forthwith ordered to take position at some eligible point fifty or sixty miles west of this place. The exposed condition of our frontier settlements call for immediate action in the premises. But for the responsibility I have been compelled to assume, the most flourishing

settlements in this Territory would have been long since laid waste, and if the necessary aid is withheld much longer their fate is sealed. Powerless as I am, without means or munitions of war, I have thus far been able to keep up a show of force sufficient to deter the Indians from further aggressions. But it is not probable, without aid, that I shall be able to keep it up much longer. The Indians are daily lurking in the vicinity of our settlements, evidently waiting to pounce upon the settlers and drive off their property, if not to murder and scalp them as soon as the force shall be withdrawn. I cannot persuade myself that this government, when in possession of all the facts, will suffer a state of things, so ruinous to the best interests of this promising Territory, long to exist, but will at once direct the establishment of a line of posts along the western boundary of the ceded Territory of sufficient strength to afford the desired protection; the expenses of this arrangement would be comparatively small. One regiment of mounted men would be amply sufficient for the service, and all the necessary supplies can be had at this point upon reasonable terms.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

MARK W. IZARD.

Hon. JEFFERSON DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS, SIOUX EXPEDITION,
CAMP No. 6, (ON THE PLATTE,)
August 27, 1855.

COLONEL: I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of a letter from the governor of Nebraska Territory, and to recommend that the troops asked for may be furnished from the first regiment of cavalry, now being organized at Fort Leavenworth.

As I am already far removed from that portion of the Territory referred to by the governor, on my way to prosecute the important objects of the expedition placed under my command, and as the troops composing the same have already, in great part, been assigned their habitual positions by orders from your headquarters, I do not feel warranted in making any essential changes.

I am, colonel, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM S. HARNEY,
Brevet Brigadier General, &c.

Lieut. Colonel L. THOMAS,
Assistant Adjutant General,
Headquarters of the Army, New York.

FORT LEAVENWORTH, K. T., August 10, 1855.

SIR: It becomes my duty to call your attention to the exposed condition of the frontier settlements of Nebraska Territory north of the

Platte river, and ask that immediate measures be taken for their protection. The Indians have already murdered and scalped two unoffending citizens, and unless timely measures are taken the principal settlements in Nebraska will be broken up. I assumed the responsibility of raising a volunteer force for the present emergency, and caused them to be stationed at such points upon the borders of our settlements as seemed to be the most eligible for defence, and will continue to keep up a show of force until released by the arrival of one or more companies of government troops, which I trust you will order to the vicinity of Fontenelle, forty or fifty miles west of Omaha city, without delay. The frontier settlers of Nebraska north of the Platte river must be protected from a repetition of such lawless outrages, or the occupancy of the country must and will be abandoned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

MARK W. IZARD,
Governor of Nebraska.

WILLIAM S. HARNEY,
Brigadier General U. S. Army.

P. S.—Please address me at Omaha city.

M. W. I.

HEADQUARTERS SIOUX EXPEDITION,
August 27, 1855.

Official.

O. F. WINSHIP,
Acting Adjutant General.