

MILITARY POSTS IN TEXAS.

JANUARY 11, 1873.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1130.]

*The Committee on Military Affairs, having had under consideration the recommendation of the Secretary of War in relation to the purchase of grounds for the sites of military posts in Texas, report a bill upon the subject, and recommend its passage.*

The committee, in making this recommendation, have been influenced by the following reasons, which they respectfully submit for the consideration of the House:

There are at present the following-named forts, or posts, in Texas: Austin, Bliss, Brown, Clark, Concho, Davis, Duncan, Griffin, McIntosh, McKavitt, Quitman, Richardson, Stockton, San Antonio, Ringgold barracks, Brazos Santiago. The grounds for some of these have been leased, and but one, Fort Austin, is the property of the United States. It is possible that posts may be discontinued at several of the places named, and that other places may be occupied. It is quite probable that for some time to come the United States will occupy posts at some places on the Mexican and Indian frontiers.

The Government is now paying ground-rent for several posts; for instance, at Fort Bliss, on the Rio Grande, opposite to El Paso, a hundred acres of land is rented for two thousand five hundred dollars a year—at the rate of twenty-five dollars an acre annually.

Fort Clark is rented at fifty dollars a month, six hundred dollars a year.

Fort Davis is rented at the rate of five hundred dollars a year for fifty years.

Fort Duncan at the rate of one thousand five hundred and sixty dollars a year.

Fort McKavitt at six hundred dollars a year.

Steps are being taken to perfect leases for other places.

The lands at these places are of little value till occupied by the military authorities, when they suddenly become valuable, and their owners exact high rents. Some of these posts are in a wild, unsettled, and barren country, and could not be occupied but for the presence of our military forces, and derive their entire value from this fact.

The State of Texas holds, by the act of annexation, the title to all the public lands within its borders, and the General Government can only acquire by purchase sites for military posts. In this respect these lands differ from other unoccupied public lands which the Government holds by reservation for military purposes.

The laws of Texas provide that the United States may secure the title to these lands in all cases except one, and that is when the land so used lies in an unorganized country and is owned by a citizen.

The military commanders unite in recommending the purchase of the sites for these posts. General Reynolds, commanding the department, strongly urges its propriety, and is indorsed by General Sherman.

In view of the fact that land can now be purchased at a cheap rate for the permanent location of military posts, and that such posts will have to be maintained for an indefinite time in the future, your committee recommend the passage of the accompanying bill.