
PROTECTION OF THE FRONTIER OF TEXAS.

JANUARY 30, 1874.—Recommended to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed with accompanying papers.

Mr. GIDDINGS, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1590.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs report the following bill, and recommend its passage:

A BILL to provide for the better protection of the frontier settlements of Texas against Indian and Mexican depredations.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized to construct and operate a line of telegraph, beginning at or near the city of Denison, in Grayson County, Texas; thence by the nearest practicable route to Fort Sill, Indian Territory; thence to Fort Richardson, Texas; thence along the northern frontier-line of settlements to Forts Griffin and Concho; thence to the Pecos River, at or near the mouth of Toyah Creek; thence to Fort Clark, on Las Moras Creek; thence to Fort Duncan, on the Rio Grande; thence down the Rio Grande, via Fort McIntosh and Ringgold Barracks, to Brownsville, so as to connect the military posts which are now, or may hereafter be, established on said line with the military headquarters of said district; and that the sum of two hundred thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated.

The importance of the measure cannot be overestimated. It will connect the military posts upon an exposed frontier with each other, and with the military headquarters of the district and of the division. It has been urgently recommended by the general commanding this district, and by the General of the Army and Secretary of War, and repeatedly called to the attention of Congress, and as a matter of economy the same protection cannot be secured by anything like the amount of cost to the Government, which is estimated by competent officers to be less than the amount required to support one company of cavalry for one year. The committee herewith submit recommendations of the general commanding the district, the general of the division, and the Secretaries of War and of the Interior, urging upon Congress the importance of this measure, with the estimates of cost of construction.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *Washington City, January 27, 1874.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, inclosing, for my comments and suggestions, a copy of House bill 950, "to provide for the better protection of the frontier settlements of Texas against Indian and Mexican depredations."

Referring to the first section of this bill, which authorizes the Secretary of War to construct and operate a line of telegraph connecting certain military posts in Texas with the headquarters Department of Texas, I beg to inform you that on the 9th of April, 1868, the Secretary of War transmitted to the House a communication from the commanding general district of Texas, recommending the construction of such a line of telegraph, and in his annual report for 1869 the establishment of such a line was again recommended, and in the annual reports of the commanding general Department of Texas for 1870 and 1871 attention was again called to the matter. Copies of the papers referred to are inclosed. On the 6th and 17th of February, 1873, copy of telegram from General Augur and an estimate from the Chief Signal Officer of the cost of construction were submitted to the House. (See Executive Documents 179 and 227, House of Representatives, Forty-second Congress, third session.)

As to the second section of the bill, I have to say that if Congress should pass the measure this Department is able to act promptly and efficiently in carrying out its provisions.

In regard to the third section, I am of opinion that it is much better to place the whole of the matters therein referred to under the control altogether of one or the other of the Departments named, and that a divided jurisdiction of the character provided by the section will only lead to a confusion of authority, and be impracticable in many respects.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.

Hon. D. C. GIDDINGS,
House of Representatives.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *Washington City, April 9, 1868.*

SIR: I have the honor to send herewith, for the consideration of the proper committee, communications from commanders in the fifth military district relative to the construction of a military telegraph as auxiliary to the defense of the Texas frontier.

Your obedient servant,

E. M. STANTON.
Secretary of War.

Hon. S. COLFAX,
Speaker House of Representatives.

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF TEXAS,
Austin, Texas, March 9, 1868.

GENERAL: I have the honor to forward herewith an estimate for a line of telegraph to connect the posts on the frontier of Texas, from the Rio Grande to the Red River. I urgently recommend that authority be granted to build this line of telegraph, as an important auxiliary to the defense of the Texas frontier. The labor can be performed by the troops, and the whole expense will be less than the total amount required to maintain one company of cavalry for one year. In a short time operators for the different posts can be obtained from the enlisted men on service at the posts.

Private business will in part re-imburse the Government for the small expense of material after the line is once in operation. The line from Red River to Austin (not essential) will probably in very short time pass into private hands, without loss to the United States, as it will run through a portion of the State that is rapidly developing, and has no telegraph.

It is simply impossible to prevent Indian incursions within our frontier line of posts as long as all Indian tribes are not confined to limited reservations. By the time news of depredations reaches the posts and the frontier settlements, the Indians are apt to be out of reach.

With this line of telegraph, and the citizen organizations of the frontier counties, (see inclosed letter to the frontier post commanders,) it is believed that Indian raids can be greatly curtailed, if not entirely prevented.

This subject has engaged my attention since October last. The plan is strongly advocated by every officer of frontier experience with whom I have been able to communi-

cate. It is universally desired by the citizens, and it is believed would give more encouragement to settlers in the frontier counties than could be extended by any other means of expending many times the amount of money required for this line of telegraph.

I have the honor to be, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 J. J. REYNOLDS,
Brevet Major Gen. U. S. A., Commanding.

Brevet Maj. Gen. GEO. L. HARTSUFF, A. A. G.,
Fifth Military District, New Orleans, La.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, January 22, 1874.

Official copy:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General.

Report of the Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, November 20, 1869.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have the honor to submit my report as Secretary of War, together with the reports of the General of the Army, and the different Bureaus of the Department, made since the last annual report.

It is recommended by General Reynolds that a line of telegraph be built connecting the posts between Red River and the Rio Grande at some convenient point with Austin, San Antonio, or Waco. Such a line will afford prompt communication with frontier posts, and will effect concert of action. The expenses will be trifling compared with the advantages that may reasonably be expected.

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.

Report of Brevet Major-General J. J. Reynolds.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH MILITARY DISTRICT,
State of Texas, Austin, October 21, 1869.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of the military service in the fifth military district, State of Texas, for the year ending September 30, 1869; also, report of civil affairs as connected with the military service under the reconstruction laws of Congress.

The length of frontier line in this department to be protected against Indian incursions may be stated in general terms to extend from the Red River to the Rio Grande, about four hundred and ninety miles, and along the Rio Grande, from Ringgold Barracks to Fort Bliss, about eight hundred and sixteen miles, making a total of thirteen hundred miles.

Indian raids during the past year have been unusually bold, and have penetrated into the settlements. The parties have generally been small in number, and the evidence is such as to warrant the opinion that they have been commanded in most instances by white men, especially those that have come furthest into the interior. Heavy damage to the citizens in live stock and property has resulted from these incursions; but the loss of life has been small, amounting during the year to about twenty-six. It will be impossible to prevent Indian raids as long as there are wild Indians assigned to any defined territorial limits. It has not been possible to afford ample protection to the frontier with the force in the Department, owing to the numerous demands made upon it in the execution of the reconstruction laws.

Voluntary county organizations of citizens have been authorized, (see General Orders No. 75, April 16, 1869,) some of which have proved quite effective. In other counties this arrangement has not met with a cordial response from the people.

In this connection I renew my recommendation, made March 9, 1868, that a line of telegraph be built connecting the posts between Red River and the Rio Grande at some convenient point with Austin, San Antonio, or Waco. Such a line will afford prompt communication with frontier posts, and will effect concert of action, which is now next to impossible, on account of the great length of time required to communi-

cate by courier. If the wire is furnished, the line can be built gradually by the troops. The expense will be very trifling when compared with the advantages that may reasonably be expected. With the development of the country, the line will probably in a short time pass into the hands of private parties.

The country between the Nueces and Rio Grande is sparsely peopled, and devoted principally to the raising of cattle. Depredations on this species of property during the past year have been very great, and, as a consequence, that portion of the State has been in a disturbed condition. The offenders, Indians and Mexicans, generally come from the south side of the Rio Grande, and the stolen cattle are conveyed there for sale. This is no new evil; but it appears to be growing worse from year to year.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. J. REYNOLDS,
Brevet Major-General, U. S. A.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL, *U. S. A., Washington, D. C.*

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS,
(TEXAS AND LOUISIANA,)
Austin, Tex., September 30, 1870.

COLONEL: I have the honor to submit the following report of this department for the year ending September 30, 1870. From September 30, 1869, to April 16, 1870, this report embraces the fifth military district, State of Texas, under the reconstruction laws.

The most destructive inroads in Northwestern Texas have been made by the Indians from the Fort Sill reservation. The evidence on this point is indubitable, and was forwarded to the War Department under date of September 20, 1870.

The depredations from the south side of the Rio Grande continue, and seem to constitute a systematic business, which can be broken up only by co-operation on the part of the Mexican authorities. Pursuit by our troops terminate at the river, while our citizens can pass into Mexico and witness the sale of their animals recently stolen.

I respectfully renew my recommendation, made in 1868 and 1869, that the wire be furnished for building a telegraph-line connecting the frontier posts. The wire will be the only expense. Our troops will build the line, and operate it until some private company will take it off our hands and re-imburse the Treasury for the outlay.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. J. REYNOLDS,
Colonel Twenty-fifth Infantry, Brevet Major General U. S. A., Commanding.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Military Division of the South, Louisville, Ky.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS,
(TEXAS AND LOUISIANA,)
San Antonio, Tex., September 30, 1871.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of this department for the year ending this date:

I respectfully renew my previous recommendations with regard to the employment of a limited number of frontiersmen and the furnishing of sufficient wire to connect the frontier posts by telegraph. This will, it is believed, insure cordial co-operation between the frontier people and the troops; also prompt support to each other on the part of the posts, at present impossible.

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

J. J. REYNOLDS,
Colonel Third Cavalry, Brevet Major-General U. S. A., Commanding.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Headquarters Military Division of the South, Louisville, Ky.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 27, 1874.*

SIR: In response to the request of the Committee on Indian Affairs, I have the honor to respectfully recommend the erection of the following lines of military telegraph:

To commence at the town of Denison, Tex., and run from there by the shortest available route to Fort Sill, Ind. T.; thence to Fort Richardson, Tex.; thence along

the northern frontier line of settlements to Forts Griffin and Concho; thence from Concho across to a point on the Pecos River opposite the mouth of Toyah Creek; thence south to Fort Clark, on Las Moras Creek; thence to Fort Duncan, on the Rio Grande; thence down the Rio Grande, via Fort McIntosh and Ringgold Barracks, to Brownsville, which already connects with the headquarters of the Department of Texas, at San Antonio.

I also have the honor, in response to the request of your committee for my written opinion upon Indian affairs, to state that I believe that the Indian Bureau should be transferred to the War Department. I am of the impression that most of our Indian troubles for the past thirty years could have been avoided, or, in other words, would not have occurred, if that Department had had sole charge of the Indians. An effort has been made to control the Indians, who are a wild and savage people, by moral suasion, while we all know that the most stringent laws have to be enacted for the government of civilized white people.

It is my belief that the present expenses of the Government, in taking care of the Indians, would be reduced at least one-third by the above suggested transfer. The Army is very perfect in its administrative organization, with carefully systematized machinery for faithfully carrying out its designs, while the Indian Bureau does not seem to have an equally efficient organization to carry out promptly, economically, and faithfully its promises to the various Indian tribes. In case the transfer of the Indian Bureau is made, there should be no half-way work about it. The entire control of the Indians should be given to the War Department.

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

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieut. Gen., U. S. A.

Hon. JNO. T. AVERILL,
*Chairman of Committee on Indian Affairs,
House of Representatives.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., January 21, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to be in receipt, by Department reference, of communication of Hon. D. C. Giddings, submitting a bill, for which he asks favorable consideration, providing for the construction and operation of a line of telegraph on the border of the Indian Territory, and connecting the different posts in Texas, for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the Army in its efforts to prevent the raiding of Indians; and also providing, by section 2, that Indians found off their reservations in this country should be considered hostile, and be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the War Department, and that all marauding bands of Indians or Mexicans may be pursued upon reservations and dealt with by the military department; and also that the military authorities may take possession of stolen property found upon Indian reservations; and providing, in section 3, that "all Indians remaining upon reservations" may be dealt with by the War Department for any crime or offense committed outside of the reservation.

Respecting the construction and operation of a telegraph-line, as provided for in section 1, I have the honor to state that, in my judgment, there is necessity for such a line connecting the different military posts in Texas with the headquarters of that department, and that a provision should also be made for connecting the post at Fort Sill with this line. From no other post in that department is prompt communication with headquarters respecting the Indians more essential than from Fort Sill.

Respecting the provisions under section 2, I have the honor to state that, according to the present understanding with the War Department, all Indians off their reservations are under its control, so far as they need any restraint or coercion by the military, and it has been the strong desire of this Office that the military should promptly strike Indians when found marauding off their reservations. For this purpose, therefore, no further legislation is required.

Respecting the provisions of sections 2 and 3, I have to state that it is the practice of the Indian Department for the Indian agent to call upon the military at his agency or in its vicinity for such assistance as he may need in the punishment of marauders upon the reservation. In my opinion, there are serious objections to dividing the jurisdiction of a reservation. It should be either under the control of this Department or of the War Department. To commit the control of a certain portion of a tribe upon a reservation to the military, where that class cannot be strictly defined, is to bring confusion of administration, and this is specially to be deprecated in a matter so difficult as that of punishing guilty parties who take refuge among the innocent. Without great care, there is liability that the attempt to punish these parties will result in

indiscriminate slaughter. No person should be better able to make proper discrimination than the Indian agent.

In the case at Fort Sill, possibly one in fifteen of the able-bodied men in these wild tribes engages in marauding, but the remaining members of the tribes are unwilling to deliver him up or point him out, claiming that they cannot do so without danger to their own lives. Whenever it is found *impossible*, under the guidance and at the request of the Indian agent, to use military force effectively in punishing marauders, in my judgment, it would be safer to turn over entirely the affairs of a reservation to the military than to attempt to administer upon them through the double jurisdiction of the military and the Indian agent.

The communication of Hon. D. C. Giddings, with inclosure, is herewith respectfully returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWD. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.