

ORDNANCE AND ORDNANCE STORES ISSUED TO WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

JANUARY 15, 1889.--Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. THOMAS, of Wisconsin, from the Committee on War Claims, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1752.]

The Committee on War Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1752) to authorize the Secretary of War to credit the State of Oregon with the sum of \$12,398.55 for ordnance and ordnance stores to be issued to the Territory of Washington on account of said State, in payment for ordnance and ordnance stores borrowed by said State of said Territory during the Nez Percés Indian war of 1877 and 1878, and for other purposes, report as follows:

The committee find the facts of this case fully and accurately stated in Senate Report No. 448, from the Committee on Military Affairs of the present Congress, which report is hereto annexed and made a part of this report.

Your committee therefore report the bill back and recommend its passage.

[Senate Report No. 488, Fiftieth Congress, first session.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 29) entitled "a bill to authorize the Secretary of War to credit the State of Oregon with the sum of \$12,398.55 for ordnance and ordnance stores to be issued to the Territory of Washington on account of said State, in payment for ordnance and ordnance stores borrowed by said State of said Territory during the Nez Percés Indian war of 1877 and 1878, and for other purposes," have had the bill under consideration, and report the same back amended, with a recommendation that it do pass.

The amendment consists in changing the phraseology of the bill as offered, and in no wise affects the merits of the measure.

The facts appear to be as follows: During the Nez Percés Indian war in 1877 and 1878 the governor of Oregon called out the volunteer troops and State militia in defense of the people of eastern Oregon, and to suppress the uprising of the Indians. The State of Oregon at this time did not have at its command the necessary arms and accouterments to equip the militia and volunteers called out, and was forced to borrow of the Territory of Washington the following ordnance and ordnance stores: 320 breech-loading Springfield rifles, caliber .50, model of 1866; 262 breech-loading Springfield rifles, caliber .50, model of 1868; 582 screw drivers, 47,445 ball cartridges, caliber .50, and 31 arm-chests.

Washington Territory has made a demand upon the State of Oregon for a return of the ordnance and stores so borrowed for the purposes aforesaid, but most of the same have been lost or are useless and it is not in the power of Oregon to return the same, and that State remains indebted on the books of the Ordnance Department to the Territory therefor in the sum of \$12,398.55, to cancel which Oregon has but \$10.98 to her credit.

The situation of Oregon is such as to have exposed that State to repeated Indian raids, and her people have suffered from uprisings and depredations to such an extent

that the General Government can well afford to make good this demand of Washington Territory upon her, and cancel the charge of \$12,398.55 standing on the records.

It has often happened that the resistance which Oregon has made was no less in defense of her own territory than of the country touching her borders, and the General Government has not been as liberal in the distribution of ordnance in her behalf as it has with Washington Territory.

An examination of the acts of July 3, 1876, and of May 16, 1878, and June 7, 1878, shows that Washington Territory received 2,000 arms and 100,000 cartridges, while Oregon received only half of that allowance. Oregon is without the ordnance supplies necessary to properly and effectively equip her militia, and yet the brunt of a defense of the people of the far Northwest against Indians would fall upon that State. Several companies of militia have been organized in the State, and the dictates of economy and common prudence, no less than a regard for the lives of a large population exposed to Indian raids, suggest that Oregon be placed in a position to dispense—in any emergency—with the support of the Government forces, always expensive and many times ineffectual, because of the time occupied in the transportation of regular troops from long distances to the scene of hostilities.

In the judgment of your committee it is both wise and humane to place Oregon and Washington Territory in a position to protect themselves against Indians raids, which can be best done by a well-equipped force of militia.

Your committee annex hereto the communications from the Secretary of War and the Chief of Ordnance received in the last Congress, touching this subject, which they ask may be made a part of this report, the conditions remaining substantially the same now as then.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, May 18, 1886.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, inclosing for the views of this Department Senate bill 2035, Forty-ninth Congress, first session, to authorize the State of Oregon to be credited with the sum of \$12,398.55, for ordnance and ordnance stores to be issued to Washington Territory in payment for those loaned by the latter to the former during the Nez Percé Indian war; and also inclosing a letter on the subject, dated the 19th of March last, from the governor of Oregon.

In reply, I beg to inclose a letter of the 17th instant from the Chief of Ordnance, in which he expresses the opinion that the object of this bill is proper and just, and recommends its passage.

I concur in the views of the Chief of Ordnance.

The letter of the governor of Oregon is herewith returned, in accordance with your request.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM C. ENDICOTT,
Secretary of War.

Hon. C. F. MANDERSON,
Of Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate.

ORDNANCE OFFICE, WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., May 17, 1886.

SIR: I have the honor to return letter of Hon. Charles F. Manderson, inclosing S. bill 2035, "to authorize the Secretary of War to credit the State of Oregon with the sum of \$12,398.55 for ordnance and ordnance stores to be issued to the Territory of Washington on account of said State, in payment for ordnance and ordnance stores borrowed by said State of said Territory during the Nez Percé Indian war of 1877 and 1878, and for other purposes," and also letter of the governor of Oregon bearing on the subject, and to report:

There is no doubt that arms and other ordnance stores to the money value of \$12,398.55 were loaned to the State of Oregon by the Territory of Washington to enable the former to aid in suppressing Indian hostilities during the Nez Percé war of 1877 and 1878. The State of Oregon is unable to return the arms, etc., which were lost and destroyed during said service, and, believing that the loss and destruction resulted from frontier service during said war, I think that the object of this bill is proper and just, and do recommend its passage.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. V. BENÉT,
Brigadier-General, Chief of Ordnance.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.