

REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the Senate relative to stationing the army, so as to largely diminish the cost of transportation and subsistence, and at the same time perform whatever service might be necessary in suppressing Indian outbreaks.

FEBRUARY 7, 1859.—Read, ordered to lie on the table, and be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 5, 1859.*

SIR: I have had the honor to receive the resolution of the Senate making the inquiry "whether the United States army might not be so posted within the line of settlements as to diminish largely the cost of transportation and subsistence, and at the same time perform whatever service might be necessary in suppressing Indian outbreaks and disturbances;" and, in reply, have to say that the capacity of the army for the suppression of such outbreaks and disturbances depends upon its proximity to the Indian tribes, who are always restrained by the contiguity of troops from acts of hostility. There is but little doubt that the true policy is to mass the troops at convenient points on or near the frontier, where forage and subsistence are cheap, and readily procured; but the character of the service, the extent of our territory, the habits of the Indians, and the ever varying wants of our emigrant population, make it difficult to determine upon any fixed policy on this subject. Whenever the department may be able to adopt such a plan, the cost of transportation will certainly be diminished; but the condition of the Indian country and the straggling settlements towards the Pacific render such a policy, at the present time, impossible, with any regard for the protection of the lives and property of our citizens.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN B. FLOYD,
Secretary of War.

HON. J. C. BRECKINRIDGE,
President of the Senate.