CLOTHING ALLOWANCE, ORDNANCE-SERGEANTS.

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

A letter from the Inspector-General of the U. S. Army in reference to clothing allowance for ordnance-sergeants.

JANUARY 5, 1892.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, December 9, 1891.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose a copy of a letter from Col. R. P. Hughes, Inspector-General U. S. Army, dated December 9, 1890, suggesting legislative action to secure to sergeants of ordnance the same clothing allowance as that allowed sergeants of Engineers and sergeants of the Signal Corps, with whom they are classed, and beg to invite your attention to the remarks thereon of the Inspector-General and the Paymaster-General of the Army.

I add my approval to the recommendation of the Major-General Commanding the Army contained in his indorsement on the papers, and in this connection it may be remarked that the matter was made the subject of a letter from this Department to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on January 21, 1888, which is published in House Ex. Doc. No. 116, Fiftieth Congress, first session, and to which attention is invited.

Very respectfully,

L. A. GRANT,
Acting Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT,
DIVISION OF THE ATLANTIC,
Governors Island, N. Y., December 9, 1890.

GENERAL: As an addendum to the various reports of ordnance detachments, heretofore forwarded, I wish to submit for consideration the following statement relative to the situation of the sergeants of ord-

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nance of the Ordnance Department. These men who, as a rule, are faithful servants of the Government, and who have served it for many years, feel that they are discriminated against.

They are the only enlisted men in the service who are not permitted to enjoy the advantage of a clothing allowance.

They are classed with sergeants of Engineers and of the Signal Corps, both of which receive an allowance for clothing amounting, in round numbers, to $234 for each term of enlistment.

I do not have access to the old records to get at the detailed history of this case, but, so far as I can ascertain, it seems to be about thus: In 1816, when section 1297 was passed, modifying the status of the Ordnance Department, it was not customary for master armorers, etc., to wear any uniform; hence they were not granted a clothing allowance. Their pay at that time was as high as that of lieutenants of the Army. The lieutenants received two rations a day, while the master armorers received but one and a half.

By the act of July 28, 1866 (sec. 1162, R. S.), these master armorers, master artificers, etc., were required to be "designated and mustered as sergeants." This of course put them in the uniform of sergeants, but, unfortunately for them, section 1297 was left unrepealed. I feel convinced that this was only an oversight.

The statement is made to me that the extra half ration, authorized by section 1297, Revised Statutes, is given these sergeants in lieu of their clothing. If that is the case the United States is driving a very hard bargain with them. The ration costs about 14⅔ cents (or the half ration, 7⅓ cents). This would have an annual value of $26.77, while the annual value of the clothing allowance of a sergeant of Engineers is $46.97. The difference, $20.20 per annum, or of $101 in a term of enlistment of five years, is the grievance. I have been very frankly told by some of these sergeants that the half ration, which has to be drawn in kind, is worth very little to them, whereas the clothing allowance possesses the dual advantage of convenience and money value.

My sympathies are entirely on the side of the old sergeants of ordnance in this matter, and I think some action should be taken to remove from their minds this sense of being wronged, and of being discriminated against. I therefore submit, for the consideration of the proper authorities, the propriety of asking for such legislative action as will secure to these sergeants of ordnance the same clothing allowance that is now enjoyed by the sergeants of Engineers, etc., with whom they are classed.

Very respectfully,

R. P. HUGHES,
Colonel, Inspector-General.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL, U. S. A.,
Washington, D. C.

[First indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,
INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., December 13, 1890.

Respectfully submitted to the Major-General Commanding the Army.

I beg also to invite attention to the status of artificers of infantry and artillery. For some reasons they are not mentioned in section 1280, Revised Statutes, as part of the enlisted personnel of the Army, and consequently they do not receive the benefit of section 1281, granting

additional pay. The fact that they do not get it has practically extinguished the office in a large number of infantry and artillery companies, to the great detriment of the service.

J. C. BRECKINRIDGE,
Inspector-General.

[Second indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, December 16, 1890.

Remarks of the Chief of Ordnance and Paymaster-General desired by the Major-General commanding.

THOMAS M. VINCENT,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

[Third indorsement.]

ORDNANCE OFFICE,
Washington, December 18, 1890.

Respectfully returned to the Major-General commanding the Army through the Paymaster-General.

On a petition of certain sergeants of the Ordnance Department in 1888, dated December 30, 1887, this subject was fully and favorably reported on by this office on January 10, 1888, and by the Secretary of War transmitted to Congress with favorable recommendation on January 21, 1888. (See House Ex. Doc. No. 116, Fiftieth Congress, first session.)

S. V. BENÉT,
Brig. Gen., Chief of Ordnance.

[Fourth indorsement.]

PAYMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
December 26, 1890.

Respectfully returned to the Major-General commanding.

The anomalous condition of sergeants of ordnance in the matter of clothing and rations, and of corporals of ordnance as to rations, can be remedied by legislation only.

The advisability of preserving the distinctions which doubtless were originally intended to act as benefits—but which now in the case of sergeants of ordnance operates to their advantage—may well be questioned. It may not be considered irrelevant to add that the benefits accruing to enlisted men, as provided in section 1281 of the Revised Statutes, is denied to chief musicians and company wagoners, as well as to artificers, as pointed out in the first indorsement. It is believed that it was not intended to deny to enlisted men of these grades the retained pay of $1, $2, and $3 per month which accrues generally to soldiers of other grades in their third, fourth, and fifth years' service.

WM. SMITH,
Paymaster-General, U. S. Army.

[Fifth indorsement.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
December 27, 1890.

For the Major-General commanding the Army.

[Sixth indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, December 30, 1890.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

In all cases such as those mentioned in this communication, and the indorsements thereon, the discrepancies which exist are doubtless accidental. They are probably due to an oversight in legislation; but as they result in an unwise discrimination in the case of certain classes of enlisted men, I recommend that the remedial action of Congress be sought.

J. M. SCHOFIELD,
Major-General, Commanding.

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