52D CONGRESS, 2d Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { Ex. DOC. No. 227.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF CURRENT RIVER, ARKANSAS.

LETTER

FROM

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

With letter of the Chief of Engineers, report of a preliminary examination of Current River, Arkansas.

FEBRUARY 4, 1893.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, February 2, 1893.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers dated February 1, 1893, together with a copy of a report from Capt. H. S. Taber, Corps of Engineers, dated January 17, 1893, of a preliminary examination made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act of July 13, 1892, of Current River, Arkansas.

Very respectfully,

L. A. GRANT,
Acting Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
UNITED STATES ARMY,
Washington, D. C., February 1, 1893.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the accompanying copy of report, dated January 17, 1893, upon preliminary examination of Current River, Arkansas, made by Capt. H. S. Taber, Corps of Engineers, under the provisions of the river and harbor act approved July 13, 1892.

Capt. Taber considers the river to be worthy of improvement by the General Government, and states that no further survey is necessary to enable him to prepare plans and estimates for the work.

AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

The Division Engineer, Col. C. B. Comstock, Corps of Engineers, deems Current River, Arkansas, "worthy of some small improvement by snagging." This opinion is concurred in by me.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. LINCOLN CASEY,
Brig. Gen., Chief of Engineers.

Hon. S. B. ELKINS,
Secretary of War.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF CURRENT RIVER, ARKANSAS.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Little Rock, Ark., January 17, 1893.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit herewith the following report of the preliminary examination of the Current River, Missouri and Arkansas, in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act of July 13, 1892.

Already having data in my office of a preliminary examination of this river made in October, 1890, it only remained to collect commercial statistics of a late date, or up to the present time, to allow me to make a very full report upon the matter.

A competent man of experience was engaged for the purpose, and whose report will be found appended.

A reference to the Annual Report, Chief of Engineers, 1891, part 4, p. 2067 to 2071, will show a very full report of an examination made of this stream by an experienced engineer.

Taking the facts as presented in the appended report, in connection with the examination previously made, which show a wonderful increase of inhabitants and commerce along this river in the last two years, I can only reiterate that this stream is worthy of improvement, and the outlay necessary for the same is fully warranted by the interest involved. No further examinations will be necessary to enable me to submit plans and estimates for the improvement of the navigable reach of this river. In the report referred to above, the following paragraph occurs:

> It appears that there are 95 miles of this river from the mouth to Van Buren, Mo., that are navigable throughout the whole year, as there is an abundance of water. The discharge at Van Buren at a low-water stage is 2,200 cubic feet per second. About 4 miles below this point is a large spring which affords 700 cubic feet more. The average width at low-water stage is 200 feet, and the velocity 2.75 miles per hour. The flood oscillation is about 16 feet. The Current River at time of floods is very swift, and has a tendency to clear the channel of obstructions in the way of snags, though many large clay-filled roots, too obstinate to be moved in this way, are lodged in the channel and make serious obstructions to navigation. Other obstructions, in the way of shoals, may be readily improved by a system of wing dams, built of rock and willow brush, for the purpose of contracting the channel.

This style of wing dam has been successfully operated on Upper White River. The commerce demanding the improvement of this river is approximately estimated to be 140,000 tons of lumber per annum in Carter County, Mo., besides 21 sections of undeveloped mineral lands (iron and lead), of which I have specimens now in my office that will compare favorably with the ores of Iron Mountain and De Loze lead mines, Missouri.

Van Buren alone, the county seat of Carter County, exports 800 carloads of lumber annually and the town of Grandin, 5 miles from the river, 2,500 cars per annum, besides millions of feet which are floated

down the river to other markets, and which estimates, it is believed, would be trebled if the river could be safely navigated.

In Ripley County, 45,000 or 50,000 tons of lumber, 5,000 bales of cotton, and over 300 carloads of merchandise received. From the State line to the mouth in Arkansas over 40,000 tons of lumber, 4,000 bales of cotton, besides grain and merchandise.

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The railway bridge, which spanned the river 3 miles below Van Buren at the time of the previous examination and which was a serious obstruction to navigation, has been removed by the railway company, leaving, however, some piles still in the river, which are a dangerous obstruction to navigation. It is presumed there will be no trouble in this matter, as the railway company will likely comply with the law, when navigation demands the use of the river.

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

H. S. TABER,
Captain of Engineers.

Brig. Gen. THOMAS L. CASEY,
Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.

(Through Col. C. B. Comstock, Corps of Engineers, Division Engineer, Southwest Division.)

[First indorsement.]

U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE, SOUTHWEST DIVISION,
New York, January 23, 1893.

Respectfully forwarded to the Chief of Engineers.

The river and harbor act of July 13, 1892, requires a preliminary examination of Current River, Arkansas.

The report of the Chief of Engineers, 1891, p. 2068, states that the Arkansas line is at present the head of steamboat navigation.

This is about 42 miles from the mouth of the river, and is supposed to be the same as Pittmans Landing.

For the reasons stated by the local engineer the Current River, Arkansas, is deemed worthy of some small improvement by snagging.

C. B. COMSTOCK,
Colonel of Engineers, Bvt. Brig. Gen., U. S. A.,
Division Engineer.

REPORT OF MR. A. WALKER, JR., OVERSEER.

LITTLE ROCK, ARK., *December 26, 1892.*

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to submit the following report of commercial statistics of Current River from Van Buren, Mo., to its mouth:

Pursuant to your orders, I proceeded to Van Buren, Carter County, Mo., by the shortest possible route, viz, via the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad to Williamsville, Mo., thence via the Cape Girardeau and Southwestern Railroad to Hunter, Mo., and thence via the Current River Railroad to Chicopee, Mo., a small station across the river from Van Buren, Mo.

Van Buren, Missouri.—Van Buren is the county seat of Carter County, Mo., and is a thriving town of 300 inhabitants. It has 5 general merchandise stores, 2 hotels, 2 blacksmith shops, 1 flour, corn, and grist mill, and 1 livery stable. Within a radius of 4 miles of Van Buren, and situated on the river, there are 5 sawmills with a combined capacity of 100,000 feet of sawed lumber per day.

Between Jacks Fork and Van Buren, a distance of 25 miles, it is estimated that there are 900,000,000 feet of pine timber now standing on and near the river bank; 5,000,000 feet of pine logs were floated down the river to Van Buren this year. This

is not considered a large float, as the bad condition of the upper river makes it a hazardous undertaking, and 15,000,000 feet of logs would have been rafted if the river had been in good condition; 20,000 cedar logs or posts passed Van Buren during the year, not including the hickory, ash, and oak, of which I could obtain no reliable estimate. This timber is for points below, such as Newport, Ark., and as far down as points on the Mississippi River.

Four thousand five hundred acres of cultivated land lie on and adjacent to the river between Jacks Fork and Van Buren. The products from these farms are corn, wheat, rye, and live stock. These products are hauled and driven overland to stations on the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad, or to Van Buren, a distance of from 5 to 25 miles. Owing to the serious disadvantage of having no other means of marketing their products, these lands are not opening up as rapidly as would be expected, considering their fertility and cheapness.

Within 2 miles of Van Buren, and immediately on the river, is a granite quarry now leased by Messrs. Brown & Burks, of Kansas City, Mo. This granite is of a rich, dark red color, dresses easily and has successfully stood all tests as to durability and strength.

Van Buren exports 800 carloads of lumber per annum, averaging 40,000 pounds to the car, but no estimate could be obtained as to its other shipments, which are wheat, corn, and live stock; these products are not sent to Van Buren for shipment, but are hauled overland to the main lines of the railroad. The imports are mainly merchandise, flour, and groceries, and amount to 360 tons for the present year.

The mineral, which is mostly lead, iron, copper, and zinc, are as yet undeveloped, although fine specimens can be seen at Van Buren.

About two years ago the Current River Railroad constructed a wooden bridge across the river at a point nearly oposite Van Buren; this bridge was built so as to enable them to get to a gravel bank. It caused such obstruction to navigation and rafting that a request was made by the lumbermen for its removal; the railroad company tore the bridge away, but left some of the piling standing, which has now become very dangerous, owing to the channel of the river changing. They have requested the railroad officials to remove this piling, but no attention has been paid to their requests.

Chicopee.—Chicopee is a small station on the Current River Railroad, across the river from Van Buren. It has 75 inhabitants, one general store, one blacksmith shop, and one sawmill, with a capacity of 15,000 feet of sawed lumber per day.

Keenes Mill.—Keenes Mill is 6¾ miles below Van Buren. It has a capacity of 30,000 feet of sawed lumber per day; near the mill is one general merchandise store. The population is 25 inhabitants.

Chilton.—Chilton is situated on the river about 1¼ miles below Keenes Mill. Its population is about 50 inhabitants. It has two grocery stores, one general merchandise store, one clothing store, one restaurant, and two sawmills, with a combined capacity of 50,000 feet of sawed lumber per day. Their imports, mostly merchandise, flour, and groceries, were about 100 tons for this year. Exports chiefly consist of pine lumber, of which article 400 cars were shipped for 1892.

Grandin.—Grandin is the terminus of the Current River Railroad, 12 miles below Chilton and about 5 miles from the river. At this point is located the large sawmill of the Missouri Lumber and Mining Company, which has a capacity of 80,000 feet of sawed lumber per day.

Grandin is a flourishing town of about 300 inhabitants. It has 4 general merchandise stores, 2 grocery stores, 2 drug stores, and 1 livery stable.

No estimate could be obtained as to its imports. Its exports are chiefly lumber, shipping 2,500 cars per annum, averaging 40,000 pounds to the car. From Grandin down to Doniphan, a distance of about 25 miles, the river is lined with pine and oak timber of fine size and thick growth. Here and there are small farms and portable sawmills. In the bottoms and small coves the land is cultivated, is very fertile, and produces good crops. Many acres of new land have been cleared and opened up this year. I estimate that there are 3,000 acres under cultivation between Doniphan and Grandin. This land will produce about 50 bushels of corn to the acre.

In Ripley County the cultivation is much more extended than in Carter County. No towns or stores are to be seen through this section, as all of the trading is done at the stations along the main lines of the railroads, and consequently leaves the river. The distance to these stations is from 15 to 25 miles, the only commerce along the river being the cutting and rafting of pine, oak, ash, and hickory logs, which are mostly floated down to the sawmills at Doniphan.

Doniphan.—Doniphan is situated on the river, and is about 41½ miles below Van Buren. It is the county seat of Ripley County, and is by far the most important town on the river. It is connected with the main line of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad by a small branch road, 20 miles long, known as the Doniphan Branch. It is a business town of 1,000 inhabitants, has 1 newspaper, 1 bank, 8 general merchandise stores, 2 hardware stores, 1 furniture store, 3 drug

stores, 2 blacksmith shops, 1 machine shop, 3 hotels; 2 sawmills, 2 saw and planing mills, and 2 turning mills, with a combined capacity of 60,000 feet of sawed lumber per day; 1 flour mill, with a capacity of 175 barrels of flour per day. Three hundred carloads of merchandise and groceries were received during this year, which will average 25,000 pounds to the car.

The shipments by railroad were 700 carloads of pine lumber, 200 carloads of oak lumber, 75 carloads of hoop poles, 20 carloads of cedar posts, 225 carloads of ties, averaging 40,000 pounds to the carload; also 100 carloads of live stock and 240 bales of cotton.

The freight rate, first class, to St. Louis, is 80 cents per hundredweight. During the year 150 rafts of sawed lumber passed Doniphan, going down the river; these rafts will average 20,000 feet of lumber to the raft. No estimate could be obtained of the number of pine, oak, cedar, and hickory log rafts which have passed down the river, but it is estimated that 6,000,000 feet of pine and oak logs have been rafted and run to this point alone. Below Doniphan and to the State line the country is well cultivated and yields good crops of corn, wheat, oats, and cotton, but no definite estimate of total yield could be obtained, as these products are hauled from 15 to 20 miles to the railroads.

Buffalo Creek.—Buffalo Creek, 12 miles below Doniphan, is a section of very good and fertile lands. About 6,000 acres adjacent to the river is cultivated, producing about 180,000 bushels of corn and 1,750 bales of cotton.

Pittmans Landing.—Pittmans Landing is the head of navigation, although at present the boats do not run regular on account of the bad condition of the river. There is a large tie and stave trade from this point, but no estimate could be obtained, as the ties and staves are cut and floated down from quite an extended length of river frontage that reaches for miles. The cotton shipments from the country lying between Doniphan and Pittmans Landing and within 5 miles of the river are estimated at 5,000 bales per annum. Below Pittmans Landing is an uninhabited tract of land which has been practically undisturbed except by small portable sawmills and loggers. The stand of timber on this tract is large and of thick growth, mostly of oak and cypress. This land is fertile and strong. Five miles back of this tract are finely cultivated lands growing large crops of cotton and corn.

Cherokee Bay Country.—At the mouth of Little Black River is the Cherokee Bay country. This section of land, which is very fertile, produces about 4,000 bales of cotton and 50,000 bushels of corn. The trading and shipping point for this country is at Jim Johnsons, situated about 22 miles above the mouth of Current River. Boats ply to this point all the year round.

Jim Johnsons.—Jim Johnsons has about 30 inhabitants, has 2 general merchandise stores, 1 sawmill (capacity 20,000 feet of sawed lumber per day), 1 feed mill and cotton gin. Its imports were chiefly merchandise and groceries, and for 1892 were 150 tons; shipments, 4,000 bales of cotton, 150,000 oak staves, 850,000 feet of lumber, hoop poles, and railroad ties. Near Jim Johnsons are 2 sawmills, one above and one below. They have a combined capacity of 25,000 feet of sawed lumber per day. From this point on down the river banks are dotted with small portable sawmills and logging camps, and there are now in sight about 8,000 cross-ties, 300,000 oak staves, and 2,000,000 feet of oak, pine, cypress, and cedar logs lying along the banks.

Ten million feet of oak, pine, and cypress logs are estimated to have passed Pocahontas this year. The amount is large when it is taken into consideration that the railroads have built a great many branches and tramways through the upper river country and are hauling logs and timber to such points along the main line as Neelyville, Williamsville, and Moark.

Merchants, millmen, and agriculturists who have passed their lives along this river estimate that the improvement of the river so that it would be navigable would increase their trade, agricultural interests, and value of land over three times their present amount and valuation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. WALKER, JR.,
Overseer.

Capt. H. S. TABER,
Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

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