

CHARLOTTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CAPT.  
CHARLES G. DOBBINS, UNITED STATES ARMY

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JANUARY 24, 1927.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and  
ordered to be printed

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Mr. VINCENT of Michigan, from the Committee on Claims, sub-  
mitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 13143]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 13143) for the relief of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and Capt. Charles G. Dobbins, Army disbursing officer, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass.

The full facts in the case are stated in the following letter of the Secretary of War which is made a part of this report:

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, December 20, 1926.

HON. CHARLES L. UNDERHILL,  
*Chairman Committee on Claims, House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. UNDERHILL: Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of November 27, 1926, inclosing a copy of H. R. 13143, a bill for the relief of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and Capt. Charles G. Dobbins, Army disbursing officer, and in reply the following is submitted:

Soon after the entrance of the United States in the World War the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce negotiated with certain landowners in the immediate vicinity of Charlotte, N. C., and obtained leases on approximately 2,200 acres of land which it offered to the United States, rent free, for the establishment of a training camp. Under date of September 1, 1917, a lease was made with the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce for the property in question at an annual rental of \$1, with renewal privilege until 1921, and accordingly Camp Greene was established and maintained by the Government until June 30, 1919, when the buildings and facilities were sold to the Camp Greene Investment Co.

The original lease of September 1, 1917, for the fiscal year 1918, as above noted, was renewed May 29, 1918, for the period July 1, 1918, to June 30, 1919, for camp purposes. However, the number of soldiers stationed thereat was greatly reduced during the early part of 1918, and after the signing of the armistice the number was further reduced and abandonment of the camp started, and as the land used for the camp was leased by the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce from the various owners at an annual rental of \$17,093.20, which rental had to be met by popular subscription, it became difficult to raise the necessary funds and the matter was placed before the War Department for consideration, and it

appears from the correspondence on file that an understanding was reached in November, 1918, between the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and the War Department that after January 1, 1919, the rent of the camp site would be assumed by the Government. However, such agreement was not reduced to a formal contract.

On August 19, 1919, the claim of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce for rental of the land in question for the period January 1, 1919, to June 30, 1919, in the sum of \$8,546.58, the amount actually paid by that organization, was heard before the War Department Board of Appraisers, and under date of September 16, 1919, by award No. 1006, the said sum of \$8,546.58 was allowed in full settlement of the claim.

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce in offering the large tract of land to the Government, rent free, did so with the understanding that a training camp would be maintained thereon, with personnel sufficient to be a financial asset to the city of Charlotte. However, early in 1918, shortly after the establishment of the camp, the reduction of personnel was started and carried forward to such extent that after the signing of the armistice the camp was reduced practically to a storage point for surplus Government property.

Notwithstanding a lease at \$1 per annum was effective until June 30, 1919, the fact that the Government ceased to use Camp Greene as a camp placed an undue hardship upon the citizens who were contributing toward the annual rental of \$17,093.20 being paid for the property, and who, due to withdrawal of personnel, were deriving no financial benefit. As the property was valuable to the Government for storage space until the surplus property was disposed of, the burden of the rental should properly be borne by the Government, and accordingly favorable report is made upon the proposed legislation.

Copies of all pertinent papers on record are inclosed for your information.

The Director of the Bureau of the Budget advises that the proposed legislation is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

DWIGHT F. DAVIS, *Secretary of War.*