IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 26, 1867.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. DOOLITTLE submitted the following

REPORT.

The Joint Special Committee of the two Houses of Congress, appointed under the joint resolution of March 3, 1865, directing an inquiry into the condition of the Indian tribes and their treatment by the civil and military authorities of the United States, submit the following report, with an appendix accompanying the same:

At its meeting on the 9th of March the following subdivision of labor was made: To Messrs. Doolittle, Foster, and Ross was assigned the duty of inquiring into Indian affairs in the State of Kansas, the Indian Territory, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.

To Messrs. Nesmith and Higby the same duty was assigned in the States of California, Oregon, and Nevada, and in the Territories of Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

To Messrs. Windom and Hubbard the same duty was assigned in the State of Minnesota and in the Territories of Nebraska, Dakota, and upper Montana. The result of their inquiries is to be found in the appendix accompanying this report.

The work was immense, covering a continent. While they have gathered a vast amount of testimony and important information bearing upon our Indian affairs, they are still conscious that their explorations have been imperfect.

As it was found impossible for the members of the committee in person to take the testimony or from personal observations to learn all that they deemed necessary to form a correct judgment of the true condition of the Indian tribes, they deemed it wise, by a circular letter addressed to officers of the regular army, experienced Indian agents and superintendents, and to other persons of great knowledge in Indian affairs, to obtain from them a statement of the result of their experience and information; which, with the testimony taken by the various members of the sub-committees, is also to be found in the appendix.

The committee have arrived at the following conclusions:

First. The Indians everywhere, with the exception of the tribes within the Indian Territory, are rapidly decreasing in numbers from various causes: By disease; by intemperance; by wars, among themselves and with the whites; by the steady and resistless emigration of white men into the territories of the west, which, confining the Indians to still narrower limits, destroys that game which, in their normal state, constitutes their principal means of subsistence; and by the irrepressible conflict between a superior and an inferior race when brought in presence of each other. Upon this subject all the testimony agrees.

In answer to the question, whether the Indians “are increasing or decreasing in numbers, and from what causes,” Major General Pope says:

“They are rapidly decreasing in numbers from various causes: By disease; by wars; by cruel treatment on the part of the whites—both by irresponsible
persons and by government officials; by unwise policy of the government, or by inhumane and dishonest administration of that policy; and by steady and resistless encroachments of the white emigration toward the west, which is every day confining the Indians to narrower limits, and driving off or killing the game, their only means of subsistence."—(See appendix, page 425.)

To the same question, General John T. Sprague gives the following answer:

"The Indians are decreasing in numbers, caused by their proximity to the white man. So soon as Indians adopt the habits of white men they begin to decrease, aggravated by imbibing all the vices and none of their virtues. Other causes exist, too numerous to be detailed in this paper."—(Appendix, 228.)

The following is the answer of General Carleton to the same question:

"As a general rule, the Indians alluded to are decreasing very rapidly in numbers, in my opinion. The causes for this have been many, and may be summed up as follows:

1st. Wars with our pioneers and our armed forces; change of climate and country among those who have been moved from east of the Mississippi to the far west.

2d. Intemperance, and the exposure consequent thereon.

3d. Venereal diseases, which they are unable, from the lack of medicines and skill, to eradicate from their systems, and which, among Indians who live nearest the whites, is generally diffused either in scrofula or some other form of its taint.

4th. Small-pox, measles, and cholera—diseases unknown to them in the early days of the country.

5th. The causes which the Almighty originates, when in their appointed time He wills that one race of men—as in races of lower animals—shall disappear off the face of the earth and give place to another race, and so on, in the great cycle traced out by Himself, which may be seen, but has reasons too deep to be fathomed by us. The races of the mammoths and mastodons, and the great sloths, came and passed away: the red man of America is passing away!"—(Appendix, 432-3.)

General Wright gives his testimony to the same point as follows:

"The Indian tribes are rapidly decreasing in numbers, especially west of the Rocky mountains, caused in some measure by the wars waged against them, and more particularly by the encroachments of the whites upon their hunting grounds and fisheries and other means of subsistence, and by the readiness with which they adopt the vices of the whites rather than their virtues; hence their numbers are rapidly diminished by disease and death."—(Appendix, 440.)

These officers have had large experience in Indian affairs, and they are supported by the concurrent testimony of many other of the most experienced officers and civilians, to be found at length in the Appendix.

The tribes in the Indian Territory were most happily exempted from this constant tendency to decay up to the commencement of the late civil war. Until they became involved in that they were actually advancing in population, education, civilization, and agricultural wealth.

Their exceptional condition may be attributed to the fact that, from their earliest history these tribes had, to a considerable extent, cultivated the soil and kept herds of cattle and horses; that they were located in a most fertile territory and withdrawn from the neighborhood and influence of white settlements, and to the legitimate influence of education and Christianity among them.

The war has made a terrible diminution of their number, and brought disease and demoralization in its train. A full account of the condition of the Cherokees will be found in the reply of the Hon. J. Harlan, agent of the Cherokees. (See Appendix, pages 441-50.) The recent treaties with the tribes in the
Indian territory, and the reports of their improved condition since the pacification, give strong hopes that their former prosperity will return.

The committee determined, if possible, to ascertain the real cause of the destruction of the tribes, and proposed to the officers above named, and to many others, the following most important inquiry bearing upon that subject, viz:

"What diseases are most, common and most fatal among them, and from what causes?"

To this General Sprague answers:

"The children die rapidly and suddenly from dysentery and measles, and from neglect and exposure to the weather. The adults die from fevers, small-pox, drunkenness, and diseases engendered from sexual intercourse. These diseases are among the men and women in the most malignant form, as the Indian doctors are unable to manage them. Indulgence in liquor, exposure, and the absence of remedies aggravate the disease. In this, striking at the very basis of procreation, is to be found the active cause of the destruction of the Indian race."

General Pope is of opinion that "venereal diseases, particularly secondary syphilis, is the most common and destructive. It is to be doubted whether one Indian, man or woman, in five, is free from this disease or its effects."

Without quoting from others, it will be found, by the united testimony of all, that this disease, more than all other diseases, and perhaps more than all other causes, is the active agent of the destruction of the Indian race. Add to this intemperance, exposure, the want of sufficient food and clothing, wars among themselves and wars with the whites, and we are at no loss to account for the utter extinction of many of the most powerful tribes, and the ultimate disappearance of nearly all upon this continent. It is a sad but faithful picture.

**INdIAN WARS WITH THE WHITES.**

Second. The committee are of opinion that in a large majority of cases Indian wars are to be traced to the aggressions of lawless white men, always to be found upon the frontier, or boundary line between savage and civilized life. Such is the statement of the most experienced officers of the army, and of all those who have been long conversant with Indian affairs.

Colonel Bent, who has lived upon the Upper Arkansas, near Bent's fort, for thirty-six years, states that in nearly every instance difficulties between Indians and the whites arise from aggressions on the Indians by the whites. The war with the Sioux, commencing in 1854, the war with the Arrapahoes and Cheyennes in 1865, are traced by him directly to those aggressions. (Appendix, page 93.)

Colonel Kit Carson, who has lived upon the plains and in the mountains since 1826, and has been all that time well acquainted with the Indian tribes in peace and in war, confirms this statement. He says, "as a general thing the difficulties arise from aggressions on the part of the whites." "The whites are always cursing the Indians, and are not willing to do them justice." (Appendix, page 94.)

From whatever cause wars may be brought on, either between different Indian tribes or between the Indians and the whites, they are very destructive, not only of the lives of the warriors engaged in it, but of the women and children also, often becoming a war of extermination. Such is the rule of savage warfare, and it is difficult if not impossible to restrain white men, especially white men upon the frontiers, from adopting the same mode of warfare against the Indians. The indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children has frequently occurred in the history of Indian wars. But the fact which gives such terrible force to the condemnation of the wholesale massacre of Arrapahoes and
Cheyennes, by the Colorado troops under Colonel Chivington, near Fort Lyon, was, that those Indians were there encamped under the direction of our own officers, and believed themselves to be under the protection of our flag. A full account of this bloody affair will be found also in the appendix. To the honor of the government it may be said that a just atonement for this violation of its faith was sought to be made in the late treaty with these tribes.

Third. Another potent cause of their decay is to be found in the loss of their hunting grounds and in the destruction of that game upon which the Indian subsists. This cause, always powerful, has of late greatly increased. Until the white settlements crossed the Mississippi, the Indians could still find hunting grounds without limit and game, especially the buffalo, in great abundance upon the western plains.

But the discovery of gold and silver in California, and in all the mountain territories, poured a flood of hardy and adventurous miners across those plains, and into all the valleys and gorges of the mountains from the east.

Two lines of railroad are rapidly crossing the plains, one by the valley of the Platte, and the other by the Smoky Hill. They will soon reach the Rocky mountains, crossing the centre of the great buffalo range in two lines from east to west. It is to be doubted if the buffalo in his migrations will many times cross a railroad where trains are passing and repassing, and with the disappearance of the buffalo from this immense region, all the powerful tribes of the plains will inevitably disappear, and remain north of the Platte or south of the Arkansas. Another route further north, from Minnesota by the Upper Missouri, and one further south, from Arkansas by the Canadian, are projected, and will soon be pressed forward. These will drive the last vestige of the buffalo from all the region east of the Rocky mountains, and put an end to the wild man's means of life.

On the other hand, the emigration from California and Oregon into the Territories from the west is filling every valley and gorge of the mountains with the most energetic and fearless men in the world. In those wild regions, where no civil law has ever been administered, and where our military forces have scarcely penetrated, these adventurers are practically without any law, except such as they impose upon themselves, viz: the law of necessity and of self-defence.

Even after territorial governments are established over them in form by Congress, the population is so sparse and the administration of the civil law so feeble that the people are practically without any law but their own will. In their eager search for gold or fertile tracts of land, the boundaries of Indian reservations are wholly disregarded; conflicts ensue; exterminating wars follow, in which the Indian is, of course, at the last, overwhelmed if not destroyed.

THE INDIAN BUREAU.

Fourth. The question whether the Indian bureau should be placed under the War Department or retained in the Department of the Interior is one of considerable importance, and both sides have very warm advocates. Military men generally, unite in recommending that change to be made, while civilians, teachers, missionaries, agents and superintendents, and those not in the regular army generally oppose it. The arguments and objections urged by each are not without force.

The argument in favor of it is that in case of hostilities the military forces must assume control of our relations to the hostile tribes, and therefore it is better for the War Department to have the entire control, both in peace and in war; secondly, that the annuity goods and clothing, paid to Indians under treaty stipulations, will be more faithfully and honestly made by officers of the regular army, who hold their places for life, and are subject to military trials for
misconduct, than when made by the agents and superintendents appointed under the Interior Department; and thirdly, that it would prevent conflict between different departments in the administration of their affairs.

Upon the other side it is urged with great force that, for the proper administration of Indian affairs, there must be some officer of the government whose duty it is to remain upon the reservations with the tribes and to look after their affairs; that, as their hunting grounds are taken away, the reservation system, which is the only alternative to their extermination, must be adopted. When the Indians are once located upon them, farmers, teachers, and missionaries become essential to any attempt at civilization—are absolutely necessary to take the first step toward changing the wild hunter into a cultivator of the soil—to change the savage into a civilized man. The movement of troops from post to post is, of necessity, sudden and frequent, and, therefore, the officers of the army, however competent, cannot take charge of the affairs and interests of Indians upon reservations any longer than military force is required to compel the Indians to remain upon them, as in the case of the Navajoes in New Mexico, and during that time even proper and competent persons acting as agents, farmers, teachers, and missionaries, devoting their whole time to these occupations, can serve that purpose much better than officers of the army.

While it is true many agents, teachers, and employés of the government are inefficient, faithless, and even guilty of peculations and fraudulent practices upon the government and upon the Indians, it is equally true that military posts among the Indians have frequently become centres of demoralization and destruction to the Indian tribes, while the blunders and want of discretion of inexperienced officers in command have brought on long and expensive wars, the cost of which, being included in the expenditures of the army, are never seen and realized by the people of the country.

Since we acquired New Mexico the military expenditures connected with Indian affairs have probably exceeded $4,000,000 annually in that Territory alone. When General Sumner was in command of that department he recommended the purchase of all the private property of citizens, and the surrender of that whole Territory to the Indians, and upon the score of economy it would doubtless have been a great saving to the government.

But that policy was not pursued, and there, as well as elsewhere, the reservation system has been adopted. That it has and will cost the government large sums of money is undoubtedly true, but, in the end, far less than the maintenance of forces sufficient to keep the peace, and suffer the Indians to range at will over the Territory. When once adopted, however, the same necessity for agents, teachers, farmers, and missionaries arises, both upon the score of humanity and economy—both to civilize the Indian and to teach him to raise his subsistence from the soil. The army and the officers of the army are not, by their habits and profession, well adapted to this work.

Another strong reason for retaining the Indian Bureau in the Department of the Interior is, that the making of treaties and the disposition of the lands and funds of the Indians is of necessity intimately connected with our public land system, and, with all its important land questions, would seem to fall naturally under the jurisdiction of the Interior Department.

The inconveniences arising from the occasional conflicts and jealousies between officers appointed under the Interior and War Departments are not without some benefits also; to some extent they serve as a check upon each other; neither are slow to point to the mistakes and abuses of the other. It is therefore proper that they should be independent of each other, receive their appointments from and report to different heads of departments. Weighing this matter and all the arguments for and against the proposed change, your committee are unanimously of the opinion that the Indian Bureau should remain where it is.
Fifth. In our Indian system, beyond all doubt, there are evils, growing out of the nature of the case itself, which can never be remedied until the Indian race is civilized or shall entirely disappear.

The committee are satisfied that these evils are sometimes greatly aggravated, not so much by the system adopted by the government in dealing with the Indian tribes, as by the abuses of that system.

As the best means of correcting those abuses and ameliorating those evils, the committee recommend the subdivision of the Territories and States wherein the Indian tribes remain into five inspection districts, and the appointment of five boards of inspection; and they earnestly recommend the passage of Senate bill 188, now pending before the House. That bill was unanimously recommended by the joint special committee, and also recommended by the committees of both Houses upon Indian Affairs. It is the most certainly efficient mode of preventing these abuses which they have been able to devise.

The following are the four important sections of the bill as recommended by the committee:

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there be, and is hereby, created five boards of inspection of Indian affairs, each to consist of one Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, who shall hold his office for the term of four years, unless sooner removed by the President; one to consist of an officer of the regular army, who may be annually detailed by the Secretary of War for that purpose, and one to consist of a visitor, to be selected by the President from among such persons as may be recommended by the annual meetings or conventions of the religious societies or denominations of the United States as suitable persons to act upon said boards; or, in case of their failure to make such recommendation, from among such persons as he shall deem proper. Each of said assistant commissioners shall receive a salary of three thousand dollars per annum, besides necessary travelling expenses; and each of said visitors shall receive a salary of two thousand dollars per annum, besides necessary travelling expenses.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That there shall be established five inspection districts of Indian affairs, as follows: One to embrace the States of California and Nevada and the Territory of Arizona; one to embrace the State of Oregon and the Territories of Washington and Idaho; one to embrace the Territories of Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico; one to embrace the State of Kansas, the Indian territory, Nebraska, and southern Dakota; and one to embrace the State of Minnesota and that part of the Territory of Dakota north of Nebraska, and the Territory of Montana: Provided, however, That the Secretary of the Interior, under the direction of the President, may from time to time change the boundaries of said Indian inspection districts.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of said boards of inspection, so far as it is practicable, to visit all the Indian tribes within their respective districts at least once in each year; to examine into their condition; to hear their complaints; to preserve peace and amity; to ascertain whether all the stipulations of treaties on the part of the United States are kept; to examine into the books, accounts, and manner of doing business of the superintendents and agents within their respective districts; to make diligent inquiry into the conduct of the officers and employés of the Indian department, and into the conduct of the military forces towards the Indians, with power to summon witnesses, and, by the aid of the military, who are hereby directed to aid them, to compel their attendance; each member of said board being hereby authorized
to administer oaths; and said board shall be authorized to suspend for cause any officer or employé of the Indian department in their respective districts, and to remove them from office, subject to the approval of the President. And said board shall report annually, or as often as may be required, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and in all cases of suspension or removal from office by said board of any officer or employé of the Indian department, said board shall make immediate report thereon in writing, stating the cause thereof, for the action of the President.

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, That all superintendents of Indian affairs, all Indian agents, and the assistant commissioners to be appointed under this act, in addition to the powers now conferred by law, shall also possess all the powers and perform all the duties now conferred by law upon circuit court commissioners, or court commissioners in all cases or matters wherein any Indian tribe or any member of any Indian tribe shall be concerned or be a party; and that in all matters or proceedings wherein any Indian tribe or member of an Indian tribe shall be concerned or a party, the testimony of Indian witnesses shall be received in all courts and before all officers of the United States.

The purpose of the bill is to provide boards of high character, and to organize them in such a manner and to clothe them with such powers as to supervise and inspect the whole administration of Indian affairs in its three-fold character—civil, military, and educational.

To the position of chief of this board there should be appointed an assistant commissioner, with a salary sufficient to command the services of a man of character and great ability, whose whole time is to be devoted to this important work.

One of the board is to be an officer of the regular army, to be assigned by the Secretary of War; (it is believed that he would be an officer of high standing in the army;) and a third is to be selected from among those persons who may be named by the great religious conventions or bodies of the United States. It is impossible to believe that these great bodies could name any other than a man of high character and great ability. Such a board not organized upon political grounds at all, and possessing, as they will, the important powers conferred in the third section of this bill, will, in the judgment of the committee, do more to secure the faithful administration of Indian affairs than any other measure which has been suggested.

The assistant commissioner will report to the Secretary of the Interior; the officer of the army to the Secretary of War; and the third will report, not only to the government, but to that religious body which may have recommended his appointment. Thus the treatment of the Indians by the civil authorities, by the military authorities, and by their teachers and missionaries, will be subject to constant inspection and supervision.

It is urged that the expenses of these boards will be considerable; but in comparison with the greater economy and efficiency their supervision would secure, that expense will be comparatively trifling.

Such boards, charged with the duty, among other things, to preserve amity, will doubtless sometimes save the government from unnecessary and expensive Indian wars.

As an instance bearing upon this point, when that portion of the committee who were charged with the duty of inquiring into the condition of Indian affairs in Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado, arrived at Fort Larned, they found that the officer there in command had just issued an order to his troops to cross the Arkansas, going south into an Indian territory where not a single white man lived, to make war upon the Comanches, a most powerful tribe which roams over all that region from the Arkansas to Mexico. Your committee felt that such an expedition would of necessity bring on a long war with that tribe; that it was wholly unnecessary, and they took the responsibility of advising
General McCook, a member of the staff of General Pope, who accompanied them, to countermand that order until he could communicate with General Pope at St. Louis. The order was countermanded; the troops then in motion were recalled, and thus by the mere presence and advice of the committee a war was avoided with the Comanches, which, had it once begun, would not have been prosecuted to a successful termination without an expenditure of twenty millions of dollars.

Your committee took the testimony, among others, of Colonel Ford, then in command at Fort Larned, upon this subject. He says, speaking of the Comanches, (see appendix, page 64:) "From the best information I can get, there are about seven thousand warriors well mounted, some on fleet Texan horses. On horseback they are the finest skirmishers I ever saw. How large a force, mounted and infantry, would be required to defend the Santa Fé road and wage a successful war against the Indians south of the Arkansas? It would require at least ten thousand men—four thousand constantly in the field, well mounted; the line of defence to extend from Fort Lyon to Fort Riley, and south about three hundred miles. All supplies would have to come from the States. Contract price for corn delivered at this point was $5 26 per bushel." With corn at this enormous price, and hay, and wood, and all supplies in proportion, the expense of such an Indian war is beyond belief. By many it was estimated that such a war would have required at least ten thousand men, and a war of two or three years' duration, to make it successful, with an expenditure of more than thirty millions of dollars.

It is believed that such boards of inspection thus organized and composed of the men who should be appointed to fill them, would save the country from many useless wars with the Indians, and secure in all branches of the Indian service greater efficiency and fidelity. If such boards should cost the government a hundred and fifty thousand dollars annually, and should avert but one Indian war in ten years, still, upon the score of economy alone, the government would be repaid five hundred per cent.

Respectfully submitted.

J. R. DOOLITTLE,
Chairman Joint Special Committee.

January 26, 1867.