

VETO MESSAGES

OF THE

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES,

WITH

THE ACTION OF CONGRESS THEREON.

COMPILED BY ORDER OF THE SENATE,
By BEN: PERLEY POORE,
CLERK OF PRINTING RECORDS.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

1886.

He was discharged June 15, 1864, upon a surgeon's certificate of disability, declaring the cause of discharge to be epilepsy, produced by blows of violence over the hypochondrial region while in the service, producing a deformity of sternum.

The claimant filed an application for pension in June, 1879, and in that and subsequent affidavits he alleged that while in barracks at Dunkirk, N. Y., and about the 9th day of January, 1864, and in the line of duty, he was attacked by one Patrick Burnes, who struck him upon the head and stamped upon and kicked him, breaking his collar-bone and a number of ribs, causing internal injury and fits, the latter recurring every two weeks.

It is hardly worth while considering the character of these alleged injuries or their connection with the fits with which the claimant is afflicted.

I am entirely unable to see how the injuries are related to the claimant's Army service.

The Government ought not to be called upon to insure against the quarrelsome propensities of its individual soldiers, nor to compensate one who is worsted in a fight, or even in an unprovoked attack, when the cause of injury is in no way connected with or related to any requirement or incident of military service.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

The veto message was read, and, after a prolonged debate, was referred, with the bill, to the Committee on Invalid Pensions.

GROVER CLEVELAND.—XCVIII.

July 7, 1886.

To the Senate of the United States :

I return without approval Senate bill No. 2281 entitled "An act granting to railroads the right of way through the Indian reservation in Northern Montana."

The reservation referred to stretches across the extreme northern part of Montana Territory, with British America for its northern boundary. It contains an area of over 30,000 square miles. It is dedicated to Indian occupancy by treaty of October 17, 1855, and act of Congress of April 15, 1874. No railroads are within immediate approach to its boundaries, and only one, as shown on recent maps, is under construction in the neighborhood leading in its direction. The surrounding country is sparsely settled, and I have been unable to ascertain that the necessities of commerce or any public exigencies demand this legislation which would affect so seriously the rights and interests of the Indians occupying the reservation.

The bill is in the nature of a general right of way for railroads through this Indian reservation. The Indian occupants have not given their consent to it, neither have they been consulted regarding it, nor is there any provision in it for securing their consent or agreement to the location or construction of railroads upon their lands. No routes are described, and no general directions on which the line of any railroad will be constructed are given.

No particular organized railway company engaged in constructing a railroad toward the reservation and ready or desirous to build its road through the Indian lands to meet the needs and requirements of trade and commerce is named. The bill gives the right to any railroad in the country, duly organized under the laws of any Territory, of any State, or of the United States, except those of the District of Columbia, to enter this Indian country, prospect for routes of travel, survey them and construct routes of travel wherever it may please, with no check save possible disapproval by the Secretary of the Interior of its maps of location, and no limitation upon its acts except such rules and regulations as he may prescribe.

This power vested in the Secretary of the Interior might itself be improvidently exercised and subject to abuse.

No limit of time is fixed within which the construction of railroads should begin or be completed. Without such limitations, speculating corporations would be enabled to seek out and secure the right of way over the natural and most feasible routes with no present intention of constructing railroads along such lines, but with the view of holding their advantageous easements for disposal at some future time to some other corporation for a valuable consideration. In this way the construction of needed railroad facilities in that country could be hereafter greatly obstructed and retarded.

If the United States must exercise its right of eminent domain over the Indian territories for the general welfare of the whole country, it should be done cautiously, with due regard for the interests of the Indians, and to no greater extent than the exigencies of the public service require.

Bills tending somewhat in the direction of this general character of legislation, affecting the rights of the Indians reserved to them by treaty stipulations, have been presented to me during the present session of Congress. They have received my reluctant approval, though I am by no means certain that a mistake has not been made in passing such laws without providing for the consent to such grants by the Indian occupant, and otherwise more closely guarding their rights and interests; and I hoped that each of those bills as it received my approval would be the last of the kind presented. They, however, designated particular railroad companies, laid down general routes over which the respective roads should be constructed through the Indian lands, and specified their direction and termini, so that I was enabled

to reasonably satisfy myself that the exigencies of the public service and the interests of commerce probably demanded the construction of the roads, and that by their construction and operation the Indians would not be too seriously affected.

The bill now before me is much more general in its terms than those which have preceded it. It is a new and wide departure from the general tenor of legislation affecting Indian reservations. It ignores the right of the Indians to be consulted as to the disposition of their lands, opens wide the door to any railroad corporation to do what, under the treaty covering the greater portion of the reservation, is reserved to the United States alone; it gives the right to enter upon Indian lands to a class of corporations carrying with them many individuals not known for any scrupulous regard for the interest or welfare of the Indians; it invites a general invasion of the Indian country, and brings into contact and intercourse with the Indians a class of whites and others who are independent of the orders, regulations, and control of the resident agents.

Corporations operating railroads through Indian lands are strongly tempted to infringe at will upon the reserved rights and the property of Indians, and thus are apt to become so arbitrary in their dealings and domineering in their conduct toward them that the Indians become disquieted, often threatening outbreaks, and periling the lives of frontier settlers and others.

I am impressed with the belief that the bill under consideration does not sufficiently guard against an invasion of the rights and a disturbance of the peace and quiet of the Indians on the reservation mentioned; nor am I satisfied that the legislation proposed is demanded by any exigency of the public welfare.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

The veto message was read and referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, accompanied by article 8 of the treaty of October 17, 1855, and the message was reported back from the Committee on Indian Affairs on the 17th of July, and placed on the Calendar.

GROVER CLEVELAND.—XCIX.

July 9, 1886.

To the House of Representatives:

I return herewith without approval House bill No. 524, entitled "An act granting a pension to Daniel H. Ross." An application was filed in the Pension Bureau by the beneficiary named in this bill, and considerable testimony was filed in support of the same. I do not understand that the claim has been finally rejected. But, however that may