38TH CONGRESS, 2d Session. } SENATE. { REPORT. No. 142

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

ON

THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR,

AT THE

SECOND SESSION THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.
BATTLE OF PETERSBURG.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1865.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, *February* 20, 1865.

Resolved by the Senate of the United States, (the House of Representatives concurring,) That in order to enable the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War to complete their investigations of certain important matters now before them, and which they have not been able to complete, by reason of inability to obtain important witnesses, they be authorized to continue their sessions for thirty days after the close of the present Congress, and to place their testimony and reports in the hands of the Secretary of the Senate.

Resolved further, That the Secretary of the Senate is hereby directed to cause to be printed of the reports and accompanying testimony of the Committee on the Conduct of the War five thousand copies for the use of the Senate and ten thousand copies for the use of the House of Representatives.

Attest:

J. W. FORNEY, *Secretary.*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, *March* 1, 1865.

Resolved, That this House do concur in the foregoing resolution with the following amendment:

Strike out the words "thirty days" and insert the words *ninety days* in lieu thereof.

Attest:

EDWARD McPHERSON, *Clerk.*
By CLINTON LLOYD, *Chief Clerk.*

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, *March* 2, 1865.

Resolved, That the Senate agree to the foregoing amendment of the House of Representatives.

Attest:

J. W. FORNEY, *Secretary.*

I certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the original resolution and the amendment of the House thereto and the concurrence of the Senate therein.

J. W. FORNEY,
Secretary of the Senate of the United States.

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

MAY 22, 1865.

Mr. WADE, from the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, in accordance with the preceding resolution, placed in the hands of the Secretary of the Senate the following, comprising the testimony taken before that committee, with accompanying reports, viz:

JOURNAL.
ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.
BATTLE OF PETERSBURG.
RED RIVER EXPEDITION.
FORT FISHER EXPEDITION.
LIGHT-DRAUGHT MONITORS.
HEAVY ORDNANCE.
SHERMAN—JOHNSTON.
ICE CONTRACTS.
CHEYENNE INDIANS.
ROSECRANS'S CAMPAIGNS.
MISCELLANEOUS.

The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the Present War submit the following report:

Your committee, at the close of the labors in which the most of them have been engaged for nearly four years past, take occasion to submit a few general observations in regard to their investigations. They commenced them at a time when the government was still engaged in organizing its first great armies, and before any important victory had given token of its ability to crush out the rebellion by the strong hand of physical power. They have continued them until the rebellion has been overthrown, the so-called confederate government been made a thing of the past, and the chief of that treasonable organization is a proclaimed felon in the hands of our authorities. And soon the military and naval forces, whose deeds have been the subjects of our inquiry, will return to the ways of peace and the pursuits of civil life, from which they have been called for a time by the danger which threatened their country. Yet while we welcome those brave veterans on their return from fields made historical by their gallant achievements, our joy is saddened as we view their thinned ranks

and reflect that tens of thousands, as brave as they, have fallen victims to that savage and infernal spirit which actuated those who spared not the prisoners at their mercy, who sought by midnight arson to destroy hundreds of defenceless women and children, and who hesitated not to resort to means and to commit acts so horrible that the nations of the earth stand aghast as they are told what has been done. It is a matter for congratulation that, notwithstanding the greatest provocations to pursue a different course, our authorities have ever treated their prisoners humanely and generously, and have in all respects conducted this contest according to the rules of the most civilized warfare.

The investigations of your committee have embraced many subjects. The results of their investigations under the directions of the 37th Congress have already been made public. The subjects of their inquiry under the directions of the 38th Congress, some of which have already been reported upon, include the following :

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC;
BATTLE OF PETERSBURG;
RED RIVER EXPEDITION;
FORT FISHER EXPEDITION;
MASSACRE AT FORT PILLOW;
HEAVY ORDNANCE;
LIGHT-DRAUGHT MONITORS;
REBEL TREATMENT OF PRISONERS; and
MASSACRE OF CHEYENNE INDIANS;

all of which are, or have been, specially reported upon. Testimony has been taken upon other subjects, which is submitted without reports, either because of the incomplete character of the evidence, or because special reports were not deemed necessary.

The investigation in relation to the army of the Potomac has been continued from the point reached by your committee in their former report, to the time when General Grant assumed the active direction of that army, and began the campaign which has resulted in the final overthrow of the military power of the rebellion. The operations of that campaign, with a single exception, specially directed by the Senate, your committee have not investigated. They did not desire to enter upon the inquiry while the campaign was still in progress, and it was concluded too late to enable them to investigate it as fully as its importance demands.

Your committee have still been unable to devote that attention to the operations of our armies in the western and extreme southern parts of the Union which was desired, and which they so amply merit. During the sessions of Congress the members of the committee have been obliged to attend to their duties here, except when some special subject of inquiry called them away for a short time. And during the last recess of Congress, when their presence was not required at the Capitol, the interest and importance of the presidential campaign then pending were so great that they felt it necessary to take an active part in it, thereby rendering it impossible for them to pursue

an investigation which could properly be carried on only by visiting our armies in the field in distant parts of the country and engaged in active operations.

For the purpose, therefore, of placing upon record a history of the operations of our western and southern armies, and the late campaign of the army of the Potomac, which shall be more permanent and satisfactory than is contained in the transitory publications of the day, your committee have prepared and forwarded to the principal officers engaged therein a series of interrogatories, with the request that full and complete answers to the same be transmitted to the chairman of the committee in season to enable him to lay them before Congress at its next session.

Your committee would refer to the record of their labors to show the spirit and purpose by which they have been governed in their investigations. They have not sought to accomplish any purpose other than to elicit the truth ; to that end have all their labors been directed. If they have failed at any time to accomplish that purpose, it has been from causes beyond their control. Their work is before the people, and by it they are willing to be judged.

In conclusion, your committee must return their thanks to those who have aided and assisted them in their labors. The officers of the War and Navy Departments have been prompt and ready in furnishing them with such papers and documents as they desired, and in supplying all facilities in their power to enable the committee to visit the various places to which they have been called in the performance of their duties. To the officers of the army and navy, who have everywhere shown themselves willing and anxious to promote in every way the comfort of the committee, and to aid them by every means in their power, the committee desire to offer especial acknowledgments for their kindness and attention. To them the committee owe to a great degree the success which has attended their efforts for the last four years.

Respectfully submitted:

B. F. WADE,
Chairman of Committee.