

J. B. MERWIN.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 484.]

MAY 16, 1862.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. OLIN, from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom the memorial of the Rev. J. B. Merwin was referred, asking compensation as chaplain, have had the same under consideration, and make the following report :

The committee believe the following and all the material facts in this case upon which is based the claim of Mr. Merwin for compensation.

It is claimed by Mr. Merwin, and your committee believe truly, that upon the suggestion of the Hon. Lewis Cass and Governor Blair, of Michigan, Mr. Merwin came to Washington on the 8th of July last, with a petition addressed to the President and the Secretary of War, asking that he should be assigned to some position in the army which would give him facilities for visiting the various camps and regiments, and for the purpose of addressing the officers and soldiers upon the subject of temperance.

The President and Secretary of War indorsed upon the petition in general terms their approval of the object, and also a reference of the whole matter to Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, who, upon the 24th of July, 1861, made the following memorandum upon Mr. Merwin's petition, viz : "I esteem the mission of Mr. Merwin to the army a happy circumstance, and request all commanders to give him free access to all our camps and posts, and also to *multiply occasions to enable him to address our officers and men.*

"WINFIELD SCOTT."

General Scott at the same time wrote a note to the Secretary of War, of which the following is a copy :

"To the Hon. Secretary of War :

"I beg leave to recommend that Mr. Merwin, temperance lecturer, and now on a mission to this army, may be appointed a chaplain in the same.

"With high respect, I remain your obedient servant,

"WINFIELD SCOTT."

Mr. Merwin proceeded on his mission, and after addressing the troops at Fortress Monroe, then under the command of Major General Butler, received from the general the following certificate :

"AUGUST 8, 1861.

"The mission of Mr. Merwin will be of great benefit to the troops, and I will furnish him with every facility to address those under my command.

"I hope the general commanding the army will give him such official position as he may desire to carry out his object.

"B. F. BUTLER,

"*Major General Commanding.*"

Major General John A. Dix says of his labors in his department :

"I take great pleasure in recommending the appointment of Mr. Merwin to a position where he may be able to carry out his great work, believing, as I do, that the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage to be the *curse* of the service.

"JOHN A. DIX,

"*Major General Commanding.*"

Brigadier General Richardson says of his labors:

"His visit and addresses to the regiments in this brigade, under my command, have been productive of very great good; the men listened with the deepest interest. There is a marked improvement in their behavior and appearance. Seven hundred and forty in one regiment have taken the temperance pledge."

Mr. Merwin continued his labors with so much success that, on the 12th of September last, the President sent to the adjutant general the following note:

"Let James B. Merwin be appointed under the 7th section of the act for the better organization of the military establishment, approved August 3, 1861, and be assigned to the work —— within, when he produces at the War Department evidence that he has been ordained according to said section.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

Upon receiving this letter, Mr. Merwin applied for ordination, and was regularly ordained as a Christian minister, but upon presenting the evidence of such ordination to the War Department, the difficulty at once arose of complying with the order or request of the President, from the fact that Mr. Merwin's services were not desired for any one regiment so much as for the army generally, and from the further consideration that the chaplains in the volunteer service are by law to be commissioned by governors of States on the appointment of the commissioned officers of the regiment to which they are attached.

Your committee are not prepared to recommend any change in existing laws upon the subject of the appointment of chaplains, nor do they deem it advisable to create a new office, the duties of which would be fulfilled by labors such as Mr. Merwin has with diligence performed. On the other hand, your committee are of the opinion that, under the circumstances of this case, Mr. Merwin is justly and equitably entitled to a fair remuneration for his services, and ask to report the accompanying bill.