

**HEARINGS BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE OF HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
CONSISTING OF MESSRS. CANNON, BARNEY,
VAN VOORHIS, LIVINGSTON AND PIERCE, IN
CHARGE OF DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS
FOR 1900 AND PRIOR YEARS ON URGENT
DEFICIENCIES**

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Hearings Before Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, Consisting of Messrs. Cannon, Barney, Van Voorhis, Livingston and Pierce, in Charge of Deficiency Appropriations for 1900 and Prior Years on Urgent Deficiencies by Committee on Appropriations

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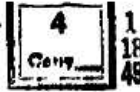
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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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U.S. Congress, House
on Appropriations,



Committee

HEARINGS

BEFORE

SUBCOMMITTEE

OF

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,

CONSISTING OF

MESSRS. CANNON, BARNEY, VAN VOORHIS,
LIVINGSTON, AND PIERCE,

IN CHARGE OF

DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1900 AND PRIOR YEARS

ON

URGENT DEFICIENCIES.



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URGENT DEFICIENCIES.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Saturday, January 6, 1900.

The subcommittee having under consideration the urgent deficiency appropriation bill this day met, Hon. Joseph G. Cannon in the chair.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

TEMPORARY CLERKS.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN C. SCOFIELD, CHIEF CLERK, WAR DEPARTMENT.

The CHAIRMAN. This item here seems to be an estimate for \$150,000 for the temporary force made necessary by the Spanish war, and it was to provide for the coming year, if I recollect aright, until the 1st of April.

Mr. SCOFIELD. The 31st of March, inclusive.

The CHAIRMAN. Now you submit \$150,000 deficiency for the remainder of the fiscal year. Now, first, is the continuation of that force necessary for the balance of this year?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Unquestionably.

The CHAIRMAN. In the average a pretty good force?

Mr. SCOFIELD. The average is an excellent force. Some of the force are very superior; others are not so good, but the average is excellent.

The CHAIRMAN. If you would take those under the classified service and put them together and mix them up and cut out a block in numbers equal to this, does this force fairly average what such a block would be?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I think, perhaps, at present it would. There was a time when it would not, but we have lopped off—

The CHAIRMAN. Lopped off and educated?

Mr. SCOFIELD. And educated, yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I might ask you in that connection, with the enlargement of the Army to 100,000 men temporarily—I mean temporarily for the remainder, practically, of the coming fiscal year, saying nothing about what may be followed thereafter—in your judgment will the retention of this force, or such a force substantially equal to it, be necessary for the coming fiscal year?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Undoubtedly, substantially equal to it. We hope and want to reduce the force as fast as the interests of the public service will permit. That is the constant tendency, but there is no indication at present of being able to do it.

The CHAIRMAN. I suppose the Spanish war, with the quantity of men in service, with statements of accounts, etc., and the increase in the Army, leaves a large aftermath that has to be cleared up?

Mr. SCOFIELD. That is exactly the situation. There are a great many things which we have to do which are really superfluous, but which we can not avoid naturally. We get a great deal of correspondence which does not strictly pertain to us. I could cite instances—matters which are in the nature of the aftermath you speak of. Matters connected with, or which rather belong to, the Auditor for the War Department, frequently come to us in the way of complaints from claimants that the Auditor has disallowed them, and we have to advise them that the Auditor for the War Department is a Treasury official. That is superfluous work, but we have to answer them, and that makes work. That is simply an illustration, and we have a great many letters asking for appointments in the Army and under the civil force, which are superfluous and unnecessary in the sense we can not give them; but they continue to write if we do not answer them, and every letter adds so much to the burden of the Department.

The CHAIRMAN. In other words, the sovereign, the people being the sovereign, whether they ask with full knowledge in all cases, from your standpoint, are entitled to attention?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir; we are public servants.

Mr. VAN VOORHIS. I want to inquire if the temporary force has been reduced or whether it is as great now as at other times?

Mr. SCOFIELD. It has fluctuated a great deal. The temporary force now is perhaps a little less in numbers than what it was at its highest point, but it fluctuates. We may have a call to-morrow from some bureau for three or four extra clerks to do work rendered necessary. Here is another thing which might happen: We very frequently have resolutions and requests from Congress for certain information. It takes you gentlemen thirty minutes to get it through, and it takes four or five days, or possibly longer, for a large force of clerks to answer the resolution; and all of those things take people off from the regular work, and the regular work perhaps gets in arrears and perhaps necessitates longer hours and a slightly additional force.

The CHAIRMAN. Those people were appointed without reference to the civil-service law?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Appointed for their real or supposed efficiency, and you say they have become fairly efficient?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir. Let me say right here, if you will permit me, we had to appoint them that way. The demand came upon us very suddenly, and you would be amazed to know and could hardly realize without actual experience how difficult it is to get good people of high grade for the Government service in an emergency. There are plenty of average people, but what we needed under the great stress and pressure of affairs were exceptionally qualified men.

The CHAIRMAN. You find that under any system?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. You would not have gotten that extra class of clerks any more out of the civil service than out of these people; or, let me put it in another way: If you turned all of the temporary clerks down to-day and filled them from the classified service, would you get as good clerks?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Oh, I think we would.

The CHAIRMAN. Would they be as efficient to-day?

Mr. SCOFIELD. If the present temporary force was wiped out to-day, and we were obliged to fill them from the certification of the Civil Service Commission, as a physical fact, our service to-morrow would be less efficient than it was yesterday when the present temporary force was in. In other words, there is no question in my mind, in my sixteen years' experience in the Department, that it takes pretty nearly a year, on an average, to make a man of any particular benefit to the service.

The CHAIRMAN. A really high-grade man, you say, to get on an emergency is very difficult. I suppose that is not only so in public life, but in private employment?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. If this appropriation is made as you submit it, will the present force substantially remain until the close of the fiscal year?

Mr. SCOFIELD. That is our expectation.

The CHAIRMAN. You drop out these words, if you will notice, at the bottom of page 19: "Persons in the classified service of the Government shall not be eligible to appointment under this appropriation, or to be transferred from any position in the classified service to positions paid hereunder, etc." Would it not be well to have them restored?

Mr. SCOFIELD. There is no objection to their being restored; the omission was unintentional, as far as I know, on the part of the War Department.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Would you be willing to have it remain just as it was?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir. Of course you are familiar with the history of that.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. I am not.

Mr. SCOFIELD. Why, it was put in in this way. With all deference to the committee and to the House, I think it was possibly unwise, but it was put in because of a belief or rumor that the War Department was appointing men from the classified service to high-grade positions on this temporary roll. That was done in one or two or perhaps half a dozen instances. For example, we had a \$1,600 man on our regular roll on the permanent force, and he had been fifteen years in the Department and was an exceptionally qualified man. Under the stress of war affairs he was obliged to assume additional duties. He was obliged to perform work of a much higher grade; he became, in fact, a chief of a division, if you please, and worked long hours and worked hard. In some instances the War Department promoted that man from \$1,600 on the regular roll to \$1,800 on the temporary roll—

The CHAIRMAN. And this was cured by this?

Mr. SCOFIELD. And that was cured by this.

The CHAIRMAN. If we put in the language I have indicated it will not be possible to do that.

Mr. SCOFIELD. No.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Do you take the efficiency of these temporary clerks?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Regularly.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. You have not that with you?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I have not it with me. We make it up every six months; a process of separation and elimination is going on as constantly as we can, and to the extent that conditions will permit. I may say I want to call attention to the fact that on the temporary force we have made appointments at a very low grade, so low that you would be surprised to know. For example, last October there were 172 temporary clerks in the Adjutant-General's Office, and out of those only 7 got as high a salary as \$1,200; 38 got \$1,000; 82 got \$900, and 38 got \$720.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. And, really, these temporary clerks, according to their ability, are working cheaper than the others, are really doing the same work for less money?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I do not want to put it exactly that way, but we put them in on the theory you have announced. We put them in because they were inexperienced, at the low grades of \$720 and \$900, and men who were exceptionally qualified—we had in some instances a little preliminary examination of a very slight character—we put them in at \$1,000 and some have since been promoted, when they were found efficient, from \$720 and \$900 up to \$1,000 and \$1,200, but we brought them in at a very low salary. Now, while you are on this 19th page, it has been suggested that it would be well to put the words "continuing," and have it read "for continuing the employment" instead of "for the employment."

The CHAIRMAN. Would it interfere with the personnel—that is, suppose a clerk is found to be unworthy, could you dismiss him?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I think so. It says, "For continuing the employment of such additional temporary force as in the judgment of the Secretary may be proper and necessary."

Mr. VAN VOORHIS. It would still be a temporary force?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir; a man who was inefficient could not be in the judgment of the Secretary of War necessary for the prompt and safe dispatch of business.

Mr. VAN VOORHIS. You could turn him off and put another on?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. You can in the regular service?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I do not make a point to do that if this will carry without it.

POSTAGE STAMPS.

The CHAIRMAN. The next item is for postage stamps for the War Department and its bureaus. You estimate \$500, and you had \$500, and your note seems to explain the necessity for the increase. That appropriation is substantially exhausted?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir; at the present time.

PRINTING AND BINDING.

The CHAIRMAN. For printing and binding for the War Department and its bureaus you estimate \$100,000. Last year you had \$237,000, and the year before—1898—you had \$305,000, and you estimated for \$289,300 for the current year with an appropriation of \$212,900.

Mr. SCOFIELD. We estimated for \$289,300, and you gave us \$212,900—\$76,400 short of what we asked.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. What is the status of that appropriation?

Mr. SCOFIELD. The status of that appropriation is that it does not exist to-day; it is wiped out.

The CHAIRMAN. It has been wholly exhausted?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir. It has only been by maneuvering with the Government Printing Office we have been able to do our printing, and they have been very kind in treating us with every possible consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Here is \$212,000 substantially consumed in the first six months, and you ask for \$100,000 more to cover the period for the last six months. The printing was most heavy in the first half, I take it from that?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Just let me remark that \$212,000, the total amount, is not the net amount available for printing and binding for the War Department, for the reason that \$75,000 is reserved for the War Records and \$12,000 for the Index Catalogue of

the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, and that leaves a net balance of \$125,000 available for the general printing of the War Department, and we are merely asking that same amount for the next six months.

The CHAIRMAN. And in your judgment \$100,000 will be enough?

Mr. SCOFIELD. I am very seriously in doubt whether \$100,000 will be.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is all you have estimated for.

Mr. SCOFIELD. At this time, because we do not want to ask for any more than we need, upon the supposition that the first six months does the greatest amount of printing.

The CHAIRMAN. These are all the items?

Mr. SCOFIELD. Yes, sir.

MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

SIGNAL-SERVICE BUREAU.

STATEMENT OF GEN. A. W. GREELY, CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER.

General GREELY. Mr. Chairman, I want to call attention to an error which was made in the explanatory remarks there on page 24, and that is that the word "military" ought to be "permanent" telegraph lines; that is to say, the commercial lines in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines are paid for out of the island fund, you know, and this ought to be "permanent" instead of "military."

The CHAIRMAN. That is so far as your signal service is concerned. For the outlying territories of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—the Army collecting revenues in those respective countries—the disbursements are made for your service from those revenues to cover the permanent service as contradistinguished from the military service.

General GREELY. Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN. Which is temporary in its nature?

General GREELY. Yes, sir; that is the idea.

The CHAIRMAN. I may want to ask you about that a little further on. The first item that you submit is a deficiency for \$193,000?

General GREELY. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. The appropriation for this service for 1899 seems to have been \$378,000. For 1900 your estimate was \$47,900 and an appropriation accordingly?

General GREELY. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. That estimate, I take it, must have been made from the standpoint of law and order?

General GREELY. It was made by the Secretary of War. General Alger told me to make my estimate based on peace and I made it under my orders. He had an idea that the Philippine business would not amount to anything, as you all know.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Who gave the order?

General GREELY. General Alger, the Secretary of War, told me he wanted my estimate made on a peace basis.

The CHAIRMAN. And the subsequent operations of the Army in the Philippines—I suppose the Philippines are responsible substantially for this item?

General GREELY. Yes, sir. I had only \$47,500 and I have spent in the Philippines \$125,000 this year, and of course the bills are all hanging over me and are unpaid. To give the committee some idea of the work that is done out there, the Signal Corps is handling now 400,000 military messages to-day in the Island of Luzon; from 250,000 to 300,000 words a day are handled on that island by this corps, and when Lawton made his famous march around to the east through that country the Signal Corps followed for 125 miles and put a telegraph instrument beside him every night, and those operations are very expensive.

The CHAIRMAN. You pay the construction under such conditions of the telegraph lines from this appropriation?

General GREELY. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. As well as its maintenance?

General GREELY. Yes.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Is there any fund collected to meet this.

General GREELY. There is not a cent collected. All we can do is military messages. It is all military. There are 2,000 miles of telegraph lines that came to the United States from Spain, but they have been all destroyed whenever the insurgents leave them. We have got possession now of about 600 miles, and they have about 1,200 miles in the southern end of the island.

The CHAIRMAN. Your next item is one for the construction of a balloon house and

administration and instruction building at the Signal Corps post at Fort Myer, Va., and you estimate \$18,500?

General GREELY. Those buildings are absolutely necessary for the efficient work of the service. The quartermaster says it does not fall within his province to build them.

The CHAIRMAN. What are you occupying there now?

General GREELY. For instruction we are occupying a most wretched and unsanitary wooden building which has been condemned and is to be torn down. I have stripped the country of telegraph operators. I have enlisted in the Signal Corps about 500 operators, and I can get no more, and they are calling on me from the Philippines every week or so for more operators, and the result is I recognize the fact and am trying to get the men. I enlist them from the ages of 21 to 25 and put them through a course of telegraphing and signaling and they are working there, and the conditions under which the work has been done there—if you gentlemen could see it you would wonder how it could be done—and we have to have a proper building for them. I have estimated the least possible amount consistent with the public necessities.

The CHAIRMAN. How many people are there in your school?

General GREELY. I have 73 men there and 20 men leave to-morrow for the Philippines who have been trained in the last three or four months, and recruits come in two or three every week, and classes are started as soon as they come in. Now, the balloon equipment and electrical equipment which we have there, which has cost the Government a large amount of money, is all stored there and can not be utilized, and all this work in connection with wireless telegraphy, which is going to be of great value and importance to the Government in the end, we have not the facilities for doing that work at all. We are just barely doing what the Philippines demand and that is all.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, this \$18,500 is substantially one building, I take it.

General GREELY. It is one building, yes; and it is only by building the three together could we get it for this sum. An estimate was made that it would cost about \$24,000, but I said, by having all built together I thought we could get it for less, and we find we can get it done for \$18,500. We have barracks which the quartermaster has built which will be finished very shortly. There has been \$80,000 spent there in the last year and a half, and what can be spent from the Quartermaster-General's department under the general appropriation has been done, but he says he can not put up this building because it does not fall within his province.

The CHAIRMAN. How many people have you at Fort Myer all told?

General GREELY. I have 2 officers and 73 men.

The CHAIRMAN. How many has the War Department there otherwise?

General GREELY. I think they have now 400 men; that is, cavalry.

The CHAIRMAN. And no infantry there at all?

General GREELY. No. Our part of the place is entirely separate. It is on the reservation but separate from that.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the size of that post?

General GREELY. There are 900 acres in the whole lot, including the cemetery, and it has all been built over now; everything that can be built over has been built over as far as practicable.

The CHAIRMAN. You say they have 400 cavalymen. How many more could be placed there?

General GREELY. I do not think any more could be put there because they have been putting up some extra buildings for the cavalry lately.

The CHAIRMAN. So it might be called a 400-men post?

General GREELY. Yes, sir; and my post is alongside of it—a detached post, and it is for 100 men.

The CHAIRMAN. The object of my asking the question, to be frank with you, is to try to ascertain whether, everything considered, there is enough room there, either under the quartermaster or under anybody else, for the 400 people and for your people?

General GREELY. Yes; I think so.

The CHAIRMAN. If you had complete control the construction of this building would not be necessary; that is to say, suppose you were in private life and General Greely had to furnish the necessary room to care for 400 cavalymen and to care for 75 or 100 signal-service people, would you put in \$18,000 for the construction of another building there?

General GREELY. I should certainly do so, because the other buildings would not do for this work. I have got \$15,000 worth of balloons, and in order to operate a balloon you have to have a house to put it in. When you inflate it you have to have a house so it can be cared for, otherwise the property goes entirely to pieces. And

then in the instruction building you have to have telegraph instruments and your tables and your opportunity for work and instruction. Now we have none such and there is no such building in the post. I certainly would do this if it was my own private property, and I believe that Mr. Cannon and Mr. Livingston know that I do not ask money from the committee that I have not thought was purely in the public interests.

The CHAIRMAN. Under existing conditions I would not feel inclined, as far as I am concerned, to recommend anything that might be desirable but not necessary at Fort Myer, because the troubles in the Philippines will go on and our duties in Cuba will go on, with all the accompanying expenditures, and while it is very desirable to have a very comfortable post at Fort Myer, doing all the work to be done, I would not do any more unless it was decidedly necessary.

General GREELY. I thought I had shown it was necessary. We have to train men to go to the Philippines. Telegraph operators are not going to leave a place where they are earning from \$75 to \$100 a month to go into the Army and go to the Philippines for \$20 a month, and we have to train the operators, so when my operators break down, as they are certain to break down, we have to replace them with other operators, and the enthusiasm of the war is over and it is becoming more and more difficult to get men of the requisite character and standing in the Signal Corps, and this building is absolutely necessary to train them in.

The CHAIRMAN. You enlist your men as operators and pay them \$20 a month?

General GREELY. They get \$17 a month and go up to \$20. We have got to provide in order to obtain a body of men to relieve these men if they break down, and the 300 men in the Philippines have been replaced inside of six months. Under the act of Congress all the volunteer soldiers had to be discharged, and we replaced those 300 men by 300 other men. Now, of those 300 men a certain percentage of them will be sick and a certain percentage of them will be coming back next year, and I have to have men to replace them. All experimental work has to be done and instruction work has to be done in the men's sleeping rooms.

The CHAIRMAN. This is the only place you have a school? There are no other places?

General GREELY. There are no other places now, but formerly we had instruction schools at Houston, Fort Logan, The Presidio, and Governors Island—four different points. There are none now, because I have no officers. All of the officers are out of the country. I have only three officers on duty in the United States outside of Fort Myer and Washington. They are all in the Philippines.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. What is the cost of fitting these men for the field, per capita?

General GREELY. A young man comes in and serves about three months at the rate of \$17 a month; that is \$51. His clothes and rations cost about \$9 a month, which is \$27, and that would make \$78; and clothing for three months is about \$22 when he first comes in the service, which would make about \$100. I suppose all the expenses to the Government direct in that way are \$100 before he is worth anything to us.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. It is cheaper than to hire a professional operator?

General GREELY. You could not hire them. We have tried that. We have hired men in Cuba for \$125 a month and given transportation down there and \$3 a day for subsistence, and all that sort of thing, and a man goes down there and at the end of a month or six weeks he resigns. I spent \$500 on a civilian operator in Cuba and only got one month's work out of him. It is much more economical to secure them by training them.

The CHAIRMAN. You enlist these men for how long?

General GREELY. For three years.

The CHAIRMAN. Your next item is for cable from Goshens Point, Connecticut, to Gardiners Island, New York, \$18,296.

General GREELY. That is in connection with the recommendation of the Major-General and the Secretary of War, and is to restore communication between those islands which form a part of the military defenses of New York. There was a very light cable put in there at the beginning of the war that was turned over to me by the Engineer Department, but which was never worth anything and in a short time it went to pieces. It is only a river cable and it was not fit for the Sound, and if anything is done in regard to that item I would like to have the words inserted, "or other electric communication," because I think if this wireless telegraphy turns out as I hope it will, in a few months I hope to put in communication between those points at the expense of about one-fourth of the estimate here.

The CHAIRMAN. The object of this improvement is purely to render the service efficient in the event of war?

General GREELY. Yes, sir. It is a part of the work I have nothing to do with; it is a part of what is known as the fire control, which devolves upon me as Chief of the Signal Corps. I look to the connecting of the different fortifications around New