

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF YAQUINA AND BIG ELK
RIVERS, OREGON.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT OF
EXAMINATION OF YAQUINA AND BIG ELK RIVERS, OREGON.

DECEMBER 8, 1897.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered
to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., December 6, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, dated December 1, 1897, together with a copy of a report from Capt. W. L. Fisk, Corps of Engineers, dated October 15, 1897, of a preliminary examination made by him, in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act of June 3, 1896, of Yaquina River, Oregon.

Very respectfully,

R. A. ALGER,
Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
UNITED STATES ARMY,
Washington, December 1, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the accompanying report, dated October 15, 1897, with map, by Capt. W. L. Fisk, Corps of Engineers, of the results of a preliminary examination of Yaquina River, Oregon, from the town of Yaquina to head of tide, including Big Elk River to Sunset Quarry, made to comply with provisions of the river and harbor act of June 3, 1896.

For reasons given, Captain Fisk is of opinion, which is concurred in by Col. C. R. Suter, Corps of Engineers, division engineer, and by me,

that these streams are not worthy of improvement by the General Government at the present time.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN M. WILSON,
Brig. Gen., Chief of Engineers,
U. S. Army.

Hon. R. A. ALGER,
Secretary of War.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF YAQUINA RIVER, OREGON, FROM THE TOWN OF YAQUINA TO HEAD OF TIDE, INCLUDING BIG ELK RIVER TO SUNSET QUARRY.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Portland, Oreg., October 15, 1897.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit herewith a report on preliminary examination of Yaquina River, Oregon, from town of Yaquina to head of tide, including Big Elk River to Sunset Quarry, made in accordance with river and harbor act of June 3, 1896, and Chief of Engineers' letter dated June 16, 1896.

The town of Yaquina, the lower limit of this examination, is located on the river about 3 miles above the entrance to Yaquina Bay, and the "head of tide" in Yaquina River proper is about 23 miles above this point.

Big Elk River joins the Yaquina about 4 miles below the head of tide and is itself susceptible to tidal influence to "Sunset Quarry," a distance of 4 miles above the confluence.

The river at the town of Yaquina is about one-fourth of a mile wide; at Toledo, 9 miles above, about half that width; at Elk City, near mouth of Big Elk River, only 100 feet in width.

On this stretch of river there are five shoals, having a depth of about 2 feet at time of low tide, but which do not form serious obstructions to navigation, in that the average range of tide at Elk City is about 6 feet; hence ample depth to meet the demand of commerce may be had on them for several hours twice in each twenty-four hours.

Yaquina and Big Elk rivers above their confluence are from 50 to 75 feet in width, each very crooked and shoal, and at points impassable because of snags, and they are believed to be unsuceptible to improvement for navigation except during time of freshet.

"Sunset Quarry," on Big Elk, is only a quarry in name, as less than 50 tons of rock have ever been taken from there, and as this same rock may be found at other points below Elk City, it is thought this quarry will be of little commercial value—at best insufficient to warrant the improvement.

The general character of the land adjacent to Yaquina River is rough and hilly, unsuitable for agriculture, and its principal production is building stone. A large portion of the commerce on the river during the past fourteen years has been that of rock transportation by the United States from quarries near Toledo and Elk City to the jetties at the entrance of the bay. Scows, 30 by 100 by 5 feet draft, have generally been used in transporting the stone, and in all several hundred thousand tons have been delivered and no especial difficulty experienced on the shoals.

The above would seem to indicate that the river in its present condition is sufficiently navigable to meet all demands of commerce, present and prospective, and therefore Yaquina River and its tributaries are

not believed worthy of improvement by the General Government at the present time.

Herewith is submitted a sketch of the portion of Yaquina River covered by the examination.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. L. FISK,
Captain, Corps of Engineers.

Brig. Gen. JOHN M. WILSON,
Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.
(Through the Division Engineer.)

[First indorsement.]

U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE,
PACIFIC DIVISION,
San Francisco, Cal., October 19, 1897.

Respectfully forwarded to the Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

I concur in the views of the district officer.

CHAS. R. SUTER,
Colonel of Engineers, Division Engineer.