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YAQUINA BAY AND WILLAMETTE AND YAMHILL RIVERS,  
OREGON.

JANUARY 5, 1897.—Referred to the Committee on Commerce and ordered to be printed.

The VICE-PRESIDENT presented the following

**LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF WAR, TRANSMITTING, IN RESPONSE TO SENATE RESOLUTION DATED DECEMBER 15, 1896, REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS IN REFERENCE TO PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT YAQUINA BAY, OREGON, AND THE WILLAMETTE AND YAMHILL RIVERS, OREGON, UNDER CONTRACT.**

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, D. C., January 4, 1897.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the Senate resolution adopted December 15th ultimo, as follows:

*Resolved, That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, directed to advise the Senate at his earliest convenience as to what steps, if any, have been taken looking to the placing of said proposed improvements at Yaquina Bay, Oregon, and the Willamette and Yamhill rivers, Oregon, under contract, as provided in said provisions, respectively, and if no steps have been taken, then the reason for delay.*

In response to the foregoing, I beg to invite attention to the accompanying report of the Chief of Engineers.

Very respectfully,

DANIEL S. LAMONT,  
*Secretary of War.*

To THE HONORABLE the PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,  
UNITED STATES ARMY,  
*Washington, D. C., December 23, 1896.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the reference to this office of resolution of the Senate of December 15, 1896, regarding the letting of contracts for improving Yaquina Bay and Willamette and Yamhill rivers, Oregon, under the provisions of the river and harbor act of June 3, 1896. This resolution directs that the Secretary of War—

*advise the Senate at his earliest convenience as to what steps, if any, have been taken looking to the placing of said proposed improvements at Yaquina Bay, Oregon, and the Willamette and Yamhill rivers, Oregon, under contract, as provided in said provisions, respectively, and if no steps have been taken, then the reason for delay.*

In reply I have to submit the following report:

1. *Yaquina Bay.*—The act of 1896 appropriates \$25,000 for continuing this improvement, and provides that—

*contracts may be entered into by the Secretary of War for such materials and work as may be necessary to complete the project as recommended by the Board of Officers*

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of the Engineer Corps October eleventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, to be paid for as appropriations may from time to time be made by law, not to exceed in the aggregate one million dollars, exclusive of amount herein and heretofore appropriated.

The duty of preparing a project for this work in accordance with the plans of the Board of Engineers was assigned to Capt. W. L. Fisk, Corps of Engineers, the officer in local charge, June 17, 1896. The project called for was submitted by Captain Fisk November 16, 1896, and transmitted by me to the Secretary of War with indorsement of November 30, as follows:

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

The river and harbor act of July 13, 1892, required an examination of the harbor at Yaquina Bay, with a view to obtaining 25 feet of water at the entrance. Major Heuer, who made the examination, expressed the opinion in his report that, owing to doubtful results and great expense, he did not consider the harbor worthy of improvement to the extent called for. This opinion was concurred in by Colonel Mendell, the division engineer, and General Casey, Chief of Engineers.

The river and harbor act of August 17, 1894, provided for an examination of Yaquina Bay Bar for increased depth. The examination was made by Capt. Thos. W. Symons, Corps of Engineers, who considered the locality not worthy of further improvement by the General Government, and his opinion was concurred in by Colonel Mendell and General Casey.

The sundry civil act of March 2, 1895, provided for the appointment of a Board of Engineer Officers to examine bar of the Yaquina Bay, "with a view to a project for deeper water," and furnish estimate of cost. This Board reported under date of October 11, 1895, stating as follows:

"It will be observed that the Board is not called upon to express any opinion, whether a further permanent deepening of the water on the bar is practicable, or, if practicable, whether the commerce of the port, present or prospective, will justify a further expenditure."

All plans presented consist of two jetties, with estimated cost of \$1,025,000.

The river and harbor act of June 3, 1896, provides as follows:

"Improving Yaquina Bay, Oregon: Continuing improvement, twenty-five thousand dollars: *Provided*, That contracts may be entered into by the Secretary of War for such materials and work as may be necessary to complete the project as recommended by the Board of Officers of the Engineer Corps October eleventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, to be paid for as appropriations may from time to time be made by law, not to exceed in the aggregate one million dollars, exclusive of amount herein and heretofore appropriated."— which is an adoption by Congress of the plans presented in the report of the Board of October 11, 1895.

Capt. W. L. Fisk, Corps of Engineers, the officer in local charge, presents within a project for this work in accordance with the plans of the Board.

The project as presented is approved by Colonel Suter, division engineer, and, being in accordance with law, is approved by me.

There is no engineering reason why this work should not proceed, and it is therefore recommended that the project presented be approved, and that contracts be entered into for the completion of the work in accordance with the law and the regulations of the Department.

The paper was returned to this office by War Department indorsement of December 9 for the opinion of the Chief of Engineers as to what good use could now be made of the \$25,000 appropriated for the work in the act of 1896, and for his recommendation whether the Secretary of War should exercise his discretion as to entering into a continuous contract for the completion of the work as authorized by Congress.

The project was returned to Captain Fisk with indorsement of December 11, as follows:

Respectfully returned to Captain Fisk, inviting attention to the indorsement of the Secretary of War (third) calling for further information.

It is noted that in Captain Fisk's report on Yaquina Bay for 1896 it is stated that "about 15,000 tons of rock are still required to secure the permanence of the existing north jetty." Are the conditions such as to make expenditure of available funds for such work desirable; and if such expenditure be made, can provision also be made

in advance of further appropriation for superintendence and contingencies of a continuing contract for completion of work as provided for in the river and harbor act of June 3, 1896?

Captain Fisk's reply to this reference of December 11 has not yet been received at this office.

The apparent delay in the preparation of the project by the local engineer may be attributed to the necessarily careful consideration of the engineering features of the proposed improvement, involving as it does an estimated expenditure of \$1,025,000.

2. *Willamette and Yamhill rivers.*—The act of 1896 appropriates \$40,000—

to be expended in accordance with report submitted February twenty-first, eighteen hundred and ninety-six, for Willamette River from Portland to Eugene, and in accordance with report of survey, dated March sixth, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, for lock and dam on Yamhill River: *Provided*, That contracts may be entered into by the Secretary of War for such materials and work as may be necessary to complete said improvements, or said materials may be purchased and work may be done otherwise than by contract, to be paid for as appropriations may from time to time be made by law, not exceeding in the aggregate two hundred thousand dollars, including the amount herein appropriated: *And provided further*, That the sum of ten thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be available for the purchase or construction of a snag boat with suitable appliances: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of War may, in his discretion, use so much of the money herein appropriated as may be necessary to prevent the erosion of the west bank of the Willamette River opposite Salem, Oregon, and to maintain the river channel at that point.

In compliance with instructions from this office of June 17, 1896, Captain Fisk submitted a project, dated July 1, for the expenditure of the money appropriated in the above-quoted item of the act.

The application of \$10,000 of the appropriation for the purchase or construction of a snag boat was authorized by the Secretary of War July 17. In his report of operations for October, 1896, Captain Fisk stated that the construction of the snag boat had been practically completed, and would be put in commission early in November and operated between Portland and Salem.

Captain Fisk's project of July 1 provides also for the application of \$20,000 of the appropriation of June 3, 1896, for expenditure upon the work of operating snag boat and building dikes on the Willamette River, to be carried on by day labor, it not being considered economical or advantageous to the United States to enter into contract for execution of the project for the Willamette. This was approved by the Secretary of War August 6. The remainder of the appropriation is reserved for work on Yamhill lock and for engineering and contingencies.

The work of dike construction at Weston Bar, Willamette River, is now in progress.

The lock and dam on the Yamhill will be constructed, if practicable, by contract, but such contract can not be made until plans and specifications for the work are prepared by the officer in local charge and approved by proper authority here. The preparation of such plans and specifications is in progress.

The resolution of the Senate is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. P. CRAIGHILL,  
*Brig. Gen., Chief of Engineers.*

Hon. DANIEL S. LAMONT,  
*Secretary of War.*