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Report : Petition of M. Hitchcock

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JULY 20, 1892.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. GALLINGER, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 3253.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 3253) granting a pension to Martha R. Hitchcock, have considered the same and report:

Claimant under this bill is the widow of Maj. Gen. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, an officer who served forty-four years in the armies of the United States, and who had an exceptionally brilliant record. The following is an outline of Gen. Hitchcock's military career:

Maj. Gen. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U. S. Army, born May 18, 1798, grandson of Ethan Allen, of Ticonderoga fame, entered West Point Military Academy as a cadet October 11, 1814. His service of nearly seven years at the Academy, part of the time as instructor of tactics, 1823-'27, and part as commandant of the Corps of Cadets, 1829-'33, had much to do with the preparation of the army that fought the battles of the country in the late war of the rebellion, most of the commanders of the Army having been under his tuition and instruction in discipline, the basis or a principal basis of success in arms.

In the Florida war he served through two or three campaigns, going into the first as a volunteer from a leave of absence, the benefits of which he relinquished; and in Gaines's campaign of 1836 acted as inspector-general. He subsequently removed the entire band of runaway Creeks, as they were called, who had kept the country in dread during the war.

In charge of the Northwestern Indians (embracing several tribes) nominally under the superintendence of Gen. Clark, who was infirm and finally died, leaving the entire duty in his hands, he disbursed in nearly three years over \$2,000,000, having all his accounts passed, after a most searching examination, without a flaw of any kind.

During the Mexican war (in the course of which he received two brevets) he served first under Gen. Taylor and afterward under Gen. Scott, as inspector-general, winning personally the approval and friendly confidence of that general, which continued unshaded until his death.

As commander of the military division of the Pacific, 1851-'54, he defeated the first expedition of Walker.

At the outbreak of the rebellion his name was submitted by Gen. Scott to the President first on the list of resigned officers whom he de-

sired to recall into the service, and a commission of major-general of volunteers was tendered to him, which the condition of his health and a sense, as he modestly expressed it, of "duty to give place to the talent manifestly shown by younger and abler officers," induced him to decline. His objections were, however, overruled, and being requested to come to Washington by Secretary Stanton, after a personal interview he accepted the commission and was assigned to duty in that city, his position being that of "military adviser" of the Secretary.

November 15, 1862, he was appointed commissioner for the exchange of prisoners of war, a position requiring "consummate tact, unerring judgment, and prompt decision," and November 3, 1865, commissary general of prisoners. In consequence of the high value of his assistance to the War Department in the performance of his multiplied vocations he was retained until October 1, 1867, when he was among the very last of those mustered out of service.

The same year an attempt was made to have him placed by legislative action upon the retired list of officers of the Army, the period of his service having been rendered "noncontinuous" by his resignation in 1855. The attempt, however, failed in consequence of the delays incident to Congressional action, and the request of the veteran to be "joined in retirement with those who were formerly his associates until his career shall come to a natural end" was virtually denied. August 8, 1870, he died, and December 14, 1871, was interred at West Point, N. Y.

The language of his request for retirement applies forcibly to the appeal of his widow for a pension when he stated that his case could not "furnish a dangerous precedent of any sort, as none like it can be urged from the past to the present time."

Mrs. Hitchcock is about 60 years of age, in feeble health, and with an income of about \$400 per year.

In view of the remarkable service rendered the country by Gen. Hitchcock, your committee unanimously are of opinion that pension should be granted, and accordingly recommend the passage of the bill, amended by striking out the words "one thousand two hundred dollars per annum," in lines 13 and 14, and inserting the words "fifty dollars per month."