
QUARANTINE STATION ON THE COAST OF TEXAS.

JANUARY 24, 1882.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

Mr. REAGAN, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 1668.]

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1668) "to provide for a quarantine station on the coast of Texas," report the bill back to the House and ask that this report be printed, and that the bill and report be committed to the Committee on Appropriations with the recommendation of the Committee on Commerce for an appropriation, to be made in the proper general appropriation bill, to carry out the purpose of this bill.

The sixth section of the act of July 1, 1879, referred to in the accompanying bill, is as follows, viz:

That section three of the act of June second, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, entitled "An act to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases within the United States," be amended as follows: At the end thereof insert: And the Board of Health shall have power, when they deem it necessary, with the consent and approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, as a means of preventing the importation of contagious and infectious diseases into the United States, or into any State from another, to erect temporary quarantine buildings, and to acquire, on behalf of the United States, titles to real estate for that purpose, or to rent houses, if they be suitable, at such points and places as are named in such section.

Under this section two quarantine stations have been established; one at Sapelo, on Black Beard Island, on the coast of Georgia, partially equipped, and one on Ship Island, on the southern coast of Mississippi, more fully equipped, while temporary assistance has been rendered at Norfolk, Va., Pensacola, Fla., and at Pascagoula, Miss.

At Sapelo and Ship Island, for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the legislation of Congress on this subject, provisions are made for the care of the sick in isolated quarters; for the safety of the well of crews of infected ships; isolated anchorage for infected vessels; for unloading and fumigating their cargoes; the use of disinfectants on such vessels, &c.; the object being to prevent the introduction into the country of yellow fever, cholera, small-pox, or other epidemic or infectious diseases from abroad, and so to prevent their spread in the country, and to avoid their ravages, and prevent the interruption of commercial intercourse with other countries; to prevent and avoid such disasters, loss of life, and commercial ruin as occurred on the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico and along the Mississippi Valley in the years 1878 and 1879, when so many thousands of people perished by yellow fever, whole families in some instances dying, in others children being deprived of their parents, and in thousands of cases families having to

abandon their homes and go to distant places, at great cost, and at the sacrifice of their business and property interests, to escape this dreadful scourge; and when, during many months the commerce and trade of those regions was suspended, to their almost incalculable damage, very largely affecting a great portion of the commerce of the United States, and to a considerable extent our foreign trade. And in addition to the great sacrifice of the lives of people and their terrible sufferings, millions of dollars were lost to our people and to the general trade and business of the country.

To illustrate the foregoing, the following extract from the report of the State board of health of Louisiana for the year 1878 is given. The approximate estimates therein given are for the city of New Orleans alone. They enable us to form some estimate of the vast damage which was suffered during the years 1878 and 1879 by the States of Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and other States on the sea-board and along the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries.

Cost of the yellow fever epidemics of 1878 to the city of New Orleans.

Estimated number of cases	25,000
Cost of ten days' sickness of each one, at \$3 per day.....	\$750,000
Cost of 4,500 funerals, at \$25 each.....	112,500
About two-fifths of the 4,500 victims represent each a capital value of \$1,000, amounting to	1,800,000
Remaining three-fifths, at \$300, amount to	810,000
Loss of time of half the industrial population, say 20,000 people, for 90 days, at \$2 per day.....	3,600,000
Values destroyed by the epidemics	7,072,500
Commercial losses by interruption of intercourse with the surrounding country, and diversion of trade to other cities	5,000,000
Total losses	12,072,500
Estimated profits of the summer trade with ports where yellow fever usually prevails	1,572,500

The difference between these two sums, say \$10,500,000, represents the actual cost of the epidemic to the material resources of New Orleans.

These figures, made upon a basis deemed moderate in all particulars, show that a trade during half the year with certain tropical ports, and worth to our city \$1,500,000, is held at a risk of more than \$12,000,000, the actual loss of 1878 from yellow fever. An estimate of the total loss to our country from this epidemic has been made by Mr. A. B. Farquhar, in a letter to Surgeon-General Woodworth, in which he places it at the enormous sum of \$175,000,000."

However efficient State quarantine laws and State quarantine officers may be in dealing with this problem within the States, they are to a large extent powerless to deal with the question of preventing the introduction of infectious and epidemic diseases into the country from abroad, for the reason that to do this involves at least partial control and regulation of our foreign commerce, which is confided by the Constitution to Congress alone.

Under section three of the act of June 2, 1879, "To prevent the introduction of contagious and infectious diseases into the United States," the National Board of Health is authorized to prescribe "such rules as are authorized by the laws of the United States and are necessary to be observed by vessels at the port of departure and on the voyage when such vessel sails from any foreign port or place at which contagious or infectious disease exists, to any port or place in the United States, to secure the best sanitary conditions of such vessel, her cargo, passengers, and crew."

Under section five of the same act, the National Board of Health is empowered to adopt "all such other rules and regulations as shall be observed on the inspection of the same on the arrival thereof at any quarantine station at the port of destination, and for the disinfection and isolation of the same, and the treatment of cargo and persons on board, so as to prevent the introduction of cholera, yellow fever, and other contagious diseases."

The importance and necessity of passing this bill into a law will be better understood when it is stated that the distance from the quarantine station at Ship Island to Brazos Santiago, on the southern coast of Texas, is about 800 miles, not computing indentations of the coast; and that such a station, properly located on the coast of Texas, would furnish the desired protection against the introduction of such diseases into the ports of Calcasieu, Louisiana, and Sabine Pass, Galveston, Velasco, Pass Cavallo, Arkansas Pass, and Brazos Santiago and the coast of Texas; these ports having a large trade with the West India Islands, Mexico, and South American ports, from which yellow fever is liable to be brought at almost any time, and a large trade with other parts of the United States and with foreign countries, which would be seriously interrupted by the existence of yellow fever in the ports intended to be protected by this bill.

A brief reference to the amount and to the rapid growth of the commerce of Galveston, one of the ports above mentioned, without referring to the considerable commerce of the other six ports, will tend to illustrate this point.

The population of Galveston is about twenty-seven thousand. Sales of merchandise for the year ending December 31, 1881, was \$37,755,000. The imports and exports for the last fiscal year were about \$30,000,000 in value.

The number and tonnage of vessels entered and cleared in the foreign trade of Galveston during the year ending June 30, 1881, and their tonnage was as follows:

	Number.	Tons.
Entered	278	215, 311
Cleared	262	183, 349

without reference to the vessels engaged in the domestic trade.

There were entered at the custom-house in Galveston during the month of November, 1881, in a single month, a total of 118 vessels, with a tonnage of 80,262 tons. In addition to this there were twenty-three trips made by steamers in the local trade, of which there were no entries made in the custom-house. The above does not include the hundreds of crafts, large and small, which constantly ply along the coast and up the rivers and bayous. Of the vessels entered during that month, sixty-six were from domestic ports and fifty-two were from foreign ports; thirty-five were steamships, two were ships, forty-two were barks, fourteen were brigs, and twenty-five were schooners.

The receipts of customs at the port of Galveston were:

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1879	\$68, 991 30
For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1880	336, 632 34
For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1881	1, 551, 333 49
	Per cent.
Increase of 1880 over 1879	400
Increase of 1881 over 1880	360
Increase of 1881 over 1879	2, 150

And the receipts of the customs at the port of Galveston for the first six months of the present fiscal year, ending June 30, 1881, were \$847,669.34.

The necessity of some such action as this to protect the vast population and commerce which it is the purpose of this bill to protect is so great that it ought not to be delayed. Its cost would be almost as nothing compared with the benefits which may flow from it. The inability of the States to deal with the whole problem is manifest; and both feelings of humanity and regard for the public interests require this precaution for the public safety.

During last year, we are informed by the National Board of Health, four vessels from foreign ports infected with yellow fever were treated at the present quarantine stations, either of which might, without such treatment, have started in our country this dreadful scourge; and once started, who could fortell that the result, in addition to the loss of life and suffering which would have followed, might not have cost the country thousands of times more than the cost of the proposed protection.

Appended hereto is a memorandum from the office of the National Board of Health, giving an estimate of the items of expense which make up the \$50,000 proposed to be appropriated by this bill. Your committee add that this appropriation is recommended by the National Board of Health, and a like recommendation was made by it to the Forty-sixth Congress.

Necessary buildings and fixtures for refuge station.

The dimensions given below are those of the Ship Island Station:

Warehouse, size 30 by 65 feet.

Disinfecting-house, size 12 by 15 feet.

Hospital, size 25 by 80 feet; accommodation for 14 sick and 1 nurse.

Hospital kitchen, laundry, and attendants' rooms, 2 stories, size 22 by 30 feet; accommodation for 8 people.

Physician's residence, size 30 by 31 feet; accommodation for from 3 to 6 people.

Lazaretto for well people, size 518 by 22 feet.

Lazaretto kitchen, laundry, and attendants' rooms, 2 stories, size 30 by 40 feet; accommodation for 18 people.

Dead-house, size 12 by 15 feet.

Boat-house, size 20 by 25 feet.

Cistern for warehouse, capacity 3,000 gallons.

Cistern for hospital, capacity 4,000 gallons.

Cistern for kitchen, capacity 4,000 gallons.

Cistern for physician's residence, capacity 2,000 gallons.

Cistern for lazaretto (4 of 4,000 gallons each), 16,000 gallons.

Cistern for lazaretto kitchen (2 of 4,000 gallons each), 8,000 gallons.

Wharf.

Sea-going steam-tug.

Boats and lighters.

Fire extinguishers and furniture.

Estimate of expenditure.

For wharf	\$5,000 00
For sea-going steam-tug	15,000 00
For boats and lighters	5,000 00
For buildings	20,000 00
For furniture, &c	5,000 00
Total estimate for establishment	50,000 00