

REMOVAL OF THE QUARANTINE STATION FROM SHIP ISLAND, MISSISSIPPI.

FEBRUARY 8, 1887.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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

R E P O R T :

[To accompany bill S. 3157.]

*The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred Senate bill 3157, beg
leave to submit the following report :*

In the year 1880 a quarantine station was established at Ship Island under the administration of the National Board of Health. To this station all vessels coming from any place infected with disease, bound for any port in the States of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, are ordered, and there remain until released by the medical officers in charge. The station is only some 10 or 12 miles from the main-land, the southern coast of the State of Mississippi. This coast is very thickly inhabited, and there are numerous health and pleasure resorts or watering places largely patronized, especially in summer, by people from many of the Southern States, and in winter by visitors from States farther north. The waters between the station and the main-land being land-locked are most of the time smooth and easily traversed both by row and sail boats.

During the summer season, at a time when the places of resort are filled with visitors, vessels infected with yellow fever are detained in the harbor, and persons ill with the disease and under treatment in the hospital, become a direct menace through irresponsible visitors who make their way to and from Ship Island despite all precautions. The proximity of the mainland, and the extent of the island, 8 to 10 miles in length, and the easy mode of communication, make it absolutely impossible to maintain the proper quarantine.

The peculiar unfitness and special danger of Ship Island as a quarantine station have been clearly pointed out and insisted upon by Surgeon-General John B. Hamilton of the United States Marine Hospital Service, in his annual report for 1883, and again in 1886, when he said :

When I took charge of the quarantine service I made a personal examination of the Ship Island quarantine station, and satisfied myself that it was unsafe for quarantine purposes, and so reported to Congress.

Dr. Hamilton came before the committee and confirmed and reiterated the above, stating also there were other localities in the Gulf to which the quarantine station could and ought to be removed.

There appears to be no doubt that the station where it is is a constant menace to the health of the adjacent coast, and, in these days of rapid

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transit and easy communication, to the whole country. There are islands or localities in the Gulf suitably situated, more remote from the mainland, and where surreptitious or unlawful communication with the mainland would be impracticable and well-nigh impossible.

The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury through a commission to select one of these, and appropriates the amount estimated by Dr. Hamilton as necessary to effect the removal, a detailed statement of which is herewith appended.

Your committee therefore report the bill back favorably, and recommend its passage.

Estimated cost of transfer of quarantine station, Ship Island, Mississippi.

Transfer of hospital stores and appliances from Ship Island to one of the Chandeleur Islands:	
Charter of steamboat ten days.....	\$2,000
Dredging channel one-half mile.....	10,000
Hospital buildings.....	20,000
Wharf and piling.....	10,000
New furniture.....	3,000
Total.....	<u>45,000</u>

