AMc 7863

File No. ~~58.~~

4/3/3

22 March, '04.

The Chairman of

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce,

House of Representatives.

Sir:

This Department has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from your Committee, dated 17 March, '04, inclosing a copy of H. R. Bill No. 14041, "To authorize the construction of light-house keepers' dwellings at Buffalo Harbor, New York", on which suggestions are asked touching the merits of the bill and the propriety of its passage. In reply, this Department begs leave to state that the Light-House Board, to whom the matter was referred, states that in its Annual Report for 1903, it recommended, on pages 65 and 66, that an appropriation of $6,200 be made for this purpose, and that it is still of the opinion that this appropriation should be made.

The following is an extract from pages 65 and 66 of the Light-House Board's Annual Report for 1903, in which the above named recommendation is made:

> "79. Buffalo Breakwater, north end, southerly side of the main entrance to Buffalo Harbor, New York.
>
> This station is situated at the north end of the old breakwater at Buffalo, N. Y., and is the fixed outpost for the main entrance to Buffalo Harbor. The structure is located on a crib, which is within the breakwater, and room allotted to it is very limited. The two light-keepers stationed here take care of the 4th-order light and operate the steam fog-signal and a fog bell, and all this requires mechanical ability and experience of a high order. The yearly salary of the keeper is $560 and that of the assistant keeper $450, and no dwelling is provided for them. This is an important station, and should command the services of first-class men for keepers. But the salaries paid are inadequate, although they would be sufficient if a proper

dwelling was furnished them and the keepers did not have to hire quarters for their families, and pay rent for them out of their meager compensation. A double dwelling can be built on the shore, on Government land, near the south pier. This site would be convenient for these keepers, as they must row to and from the light-station in a small boat. It is estimated that a suitable keepers' dwelling can be erected here for $5,500.

Owing to the increases in the prices of materials and labor, it is now estimated that the building will cost $6,200, and the Board recommends that an appropriation of that amount be made therefor."

This Department concurs in the recommendation of the Light-House Board, and recommends the passage of the bill in question.

Respectfully,

Secretary.