

WILLIAM BARDEL

FEBRUARY 21, 1927.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed

Mr. UNDERHILL, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 3283]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3283) for the relief of the estate of William Bardel, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass with the following amendments:

In line 5, after the word "appropriated", insert "in full settlement against the Government"; and after the word "to" in line 5 insert "the estate of".

STATEMENT OF FACTS

This is a bill for the relief of the estate of William Bardel, formerly a member of the American Consular Service, to reimburse the estate for loss of personal property sustained by the late William Bardel while in the performance of his duties as American consul at Rheims, France.

Attached herewith and made a part of this report is a dispatch relative to the hardships suffered by Mr. Bardel and the losses sustained by him because of war-time conditions, together with a copy of a commendatory instruction addressed to him by the Department of State.

As it seems clear that the claimant suffered heavy losses, your committee recommends favorable consideration of H. R. 3283.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, January 24, 1927.

HON. CHARLES L. UNDERHILL,
Chairman Committee on Claims,
House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. UNDERHILL: I have your letter of January 15, 1927, inclosing a copy of H. R. 3283, for the relief of Mr. William Bardel, formerly American

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DEAR MR. UNDERHILL: I have your letter of January 15, 1927, inclosing a copy of H. R. 3283, for the relief of Mr. William Bardel, formerly American

consul at Reims, France, in which you inquire as to whether the department is in position to furnish data from which an estimate could be made as to the amount of Mr. Bardel's loss. It is noted that the sum fixed in H. R. 3283 is \$4,800.

Before touching on the subject of your inquiry, I regret to inform you of the receipt by the department of a letter of January 5, 1927, from Miss Hedwig Bardel, 150 Winthrop Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., advising of the death, on December 31, 1926, of her father, the beneficiary of the above-mentioned relief bill. In view of this unfortunate circumstance your committee will no doubt wish to consider the question of amending the bill to provide the relief, if granted, to Mr. Bardel's estate. It might be added that Miss Bardel in communicating the foregoing information advises that three days before his death the deceased requested her to extend every effort looking to the procurement of the relief prayed for in order that the widow, now 74 years of age, and stated to be in need of funds, might be benefited.

Gladly complying with your request, I inclose a copy of a memorandum submitted to the department by Mr. Bardel indicating the nature and circumstances of the loss suffered and furnishing a list with values of the effects lost. In addition thereto is appended an excerpt of a statement made to the department by Mr. Bardel on this subject while he was stationed at Curacao, West Indies. You will note therefrom that the total net loss as estimated by him is \$4,800.

Referring to the statement contained in your letter to the effect that the Director of the Budget Bureau has withdrawn his objection to the bill and will probably so advise your committee in the near future, I have pleasure in inclosing a copy of a letter of June 30, 1926, from General Lord, in which the department is advised that because of the unusual circumstances surrounding this case there is no objection to the enactment of legislation to pay Mr. Bardel \$4,800 for the purpose indicated, if Congress deems it a just claim.

If the department may be of further service in this respect, I shall hope that you will not hesitate to call upon it.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

FRANK B. KELLOGG.

AMERICAN CONSULATE,
Troyes, France, October 10, 1914.

Subject: Reports why removal to this city became necessary.

The SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

SIR: I have the honor to report to-day that since my last dispatch (No. 151) of September 4, 1914, to the department, I have had to undergo the most terrible experience of all my life. Hardly had I finished the above dispatch, when the German troops which the day before had been proclaimed to arrive, and which the population of Reims were enjoined to receive peacefully, began their entry into the city by a bombardment of all its parts.

A number of bombs were thrown quite close to the consulate, one of them falling about 100 feet from the house, killing two pedestrians, and another falling less than 80 feet behind our house, destroying a beautiful mansion. A near-by cellar of one of the champagne houses, to which we had to flee, afforded us shelter.

This bombardment lasted only 40 minutes, but it cost the lives of 55 persons and wounded more than 100, besides destroying an immense amount of valuable property. An error made by the Germans regarding the nonreturning of two plenipotentiaries sent by them into the city caused this first bombardment, and all that the terrified inhabitants of the town received as a recompense for this error, was a written expression of regret from the commanding officer. The German troops then entered and quiet was restored. During their occupation of the town I assisted as much as it was consistent with my duties the municipality of Reims, as well as the German officers, in arranging for the requisitions demanded by the latter, my knowledge of the German language being quite a factor in these matters.

On September 12, 1914, a movement to leave the city was begun by the Germans, who by nighttime had all gone, permitting the French Army to reenter the town on September 13, 1914.

During this time, however, heavy cannonading was heard all around Reims, and on September 14, 1914, the Germans had again come so near the town having during the night occupied nearly all the forts on the east which were

originally destined to protect it, that in the duel of artillery which ensued between the French on elevated points in and near the city and the Germans occupying the forts and hills between these, none of these more than 5 miles away from the city, bombs which may have been stray or otherwise again fell into all parts of Reims, principally, however, into its center, in which, unfortunately, the consulate is also located. From that time on there was not a day when myself, my family, and help did not have to flee for safety into the wine cellars; at first this happened two or three times a day, but during the nights there was comparative calm, but beginning with the 17th of September the bombardment became so intense that for five days and six nights we had to remain continuously in the cellars, having with us scant provisions and only the most necessary clothing, and having to sleep or rather to rest only on straw, at a temperature of about 34° F., and in a most abominable moist and unpleasant atmosphere. During the time of our forced stay in the cellars, on September 17, the house in whose cellars we took refuge was struck and partially destroyed by five bombs thrown one after the other in about as many seconds, but the cellars being 40 feet under ground, we only suffered from the shock; a few minutes later a bomb fell on a fine dwelling about 100 feet from these cellars and just directly opposite the consulate in the Rue Kellerman; had it not been for a very massive chimney on the house struck, this bomb would have gone directly into the front of the consulate; as it was, a few windows of the consulate were broken by the concussion and the flag received a few small holes from pieces of shell and masonry.

On September 19, a bomb, which came from the opposite direction, struck the house on the right of the consulate, a few feet above the ground in the rear and exactly at the party wall separating the consulate from the other house. This party wall, which being nearly 3 feet thick, it being the remnant of a former factory on whose site our building was erected and which extending about 5 feet out between our house and the one next door, had always been an eyesore to us, again protected the consulate from heavy damage; the bomb, after striking that wall, diverged into the lower part of the house next door and demolished all the interior of the building, while in our house we had only most of the windows broken.

There may be some excuse for the bombs thus thrown, because the French artillery in its efforts to dislodge the German artillery from the forts took up elevated positions in the city wherever they thought they could do so to advantage and irrespective of the private houses that were located in and around the firing lines.

What excuse there may be found, however, for the total destruction on September 20 of the world renowned "Cathedrale" into which, although located at least 2 kilometers behind any of the firing lines, at least 10 bombs were lanced, is as yet inconceivable.

Finally we all became so exhausted from the hardships we had to undergo and from the horrors we experienced on our runs for safety, that we could stand it in the cellars no longer; we ran there only when bombs seemed to come close to our abode again, taking our chances the rest of the time. Not being able to persuade my wife and children to leave the city for safer quarters, without me, I wavered between sense of duty and love of family, for more than 10 days, not wishing to abandon my post and still extremely anxious to keep my dear ones from harm, till finally, my wife and daughter showed signs of nervous prostration, which, if not remedied, would surely have thrown them on a sick bed. Provisions were also getting so scarce that for weeks we had to go without milk, butter, eggs, and for a time even entirely without bread. The electric light and gas were cut off on account of the bombardment, and we had to resort to kerosene lamps for lighting, which had soon to cede for candles, and even those were getting very scarce.

Fortunately, on September 26, our excellent ambassador, Mr. Herrick, through his military attaché, Major Cosby, sent me 3,000 francs which came just in time, my available funds being nearly exhausted. I then concluded to leave with my family.

There being absolutely nothing to do in the consulate, no Americans residing in the city, all American tourists having left, no invoices or other matters to be legalized, it was only a question of putting the property of the Government, as far as this could be done under existing circumstances, into the hands of a trusted person. Our vice consul, Mr. Stanford, whose wife and child had left long ago, and whose apartment, with nearly all that was in it, having been destroyed at the beginning of the bombardment, and who having agreed with the champagne firm for which he works as head clerk to stay at Reims, come what may, con-

sented upon my request to take charge of the consulate, as well as of my own property, and to remain in the house at night, whenever this was possible; the janitor also decided to stay in the consulate, at least for the present.

I locked all the archives, seals, etc., into the safe, and turned over the keys and Government property, as well as my own, to Mr. Stanford on September 30, 1914, and left in a carriage while bombs were flying all around us, for the nearest place of safety, viz, Epernay, having nothing but the most necessary apparel with us and leaving all our personal possessions behind us. This trip, which by railroad can be made in 45 minutes, at an expense for all of 12 francs, took four hours and cost me nearly 200 francs. I found that city so full of refugees from Reims, with no prospects for obtaining only scant quarters for my family, that we went by rail to Chalons, where conditions were exactly the same, and the sound of the terrible cannonading around Reims still so perceptible in either town that there would have been no rest for us had we been able to find refuge. I therefore concluded to go to this city, which, being about 120 miles southwest of Reims, is the third largest city in my consular district, and where I found fairly good quarters at the address given at the foot of this.

Having my family installed, I went, on October 3, to Paris, where I reported verbally to Consul General Thackera, as also to Ambassador Herrick, all the horrors and grievances I had to endure during the previous four weeks. Vice Consul General Palmer was kind enough to forward to the department my quarterly accounts, I being, at that time, perfectly unable to write a coherent letter. It was at the embassy where I learned to my great gratification that the department had sanctioned the forced leave of absence I had to take, and I have since learned through Ambassador Herrick that the department consents to my staying temporarily in this city. Both Mr. Herrick and Mr. Thackera, by their kind, sympathetic interest they took in my misfortune, have contributed much to help set my troubled mind at rest, and I thank them as heartily for their great kindness to me as I thank the department for sanctioning my action. I have, since I left Rheims, not been able to get in touch with Mr. Stanford, but hope to hear from him in a few days. What news we receive here from other refugees arriving about conditions in Rheims are most discouraging; the city remains exactly on the long firing line, which extends over more than 200 kilometers, and since neither army seems to recede it is only a question of time when nothing of that old historical town will remain intact. While I am anxious and ready to return to my post as soon as this can be done with any show of safety, I am afraid this will be possible only after considerable delay, if at all. If, therefore, the department, in order to utilize my services, wishes to transfer me to another post which I can reach from here, I am quite ready and willing to assume charge of the same.

This is to be only a preliminary report; I have data of all I saw and experienced at Rheims from the beginning of the mobilization, and I shall embody this in a full report, which I will make to the department whenever and wherever conditions are such as to permit of a free expression of opinion.

Meanwhile, I will report to the department from time to time about conditions in Rheims and in the rest of my consular district.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

W. BARDEL,
American Consul at Rheims.

(Now stationed at No. 81 Rue d'Urbain Quatre Troyes, France.)

P. S.—Having written this report on a typewriter to which I am not quite accustomed yet, I trust that the department will pardon irregularities showing in the same; also to excuse the spacing of the lines, being short of paper.

NOVEMBER 4, 1914.

WILLIAM BARDEL, Esq.,
American Consul, Reims, France;
Now at No. 81, Rue d'Urbain Quatre, Troyes, France.

SIR: The department has received your dispatch No. 152 of October 10, 1914, with reference to conditions at Reims, resulting from the European war, and saying that by reason thereof you were compelled to remove yourself and family to Troyes.

Your action in removing to Troyes is approved. In this connection you are informed that the department believes that such expenses as you may have been obliged to incur for care of the office at Reims, travel, etc., should be borne by the

Government. You should accordingly render a separate account, supported as far as practicable by vouchers in the form of receipted bills, covering the expenditures made by you for the above-mentioned purposes. You should also forward a verified list of other extraordinary expenses or losses.

The department appreciates the trying circumstances under which you have labored since the outbreak of the war, and it commends you for your efforts in this emergency, and particularly for your loyalty and courage in remaining at your post for so long a time in the perils incident to the conflict at Reims of opposing forces of the belligerents.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILBUR J. CARR
(For the Acting Secretary of State).

BUREAU OF THE BUDGET,
Washington, June 30, 1926.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: On March 10, 1926, I advised you in reply to a letter from Assistant Secretary of State Carr, dated March 9, 1926, that H. R. 3283, being a bill to pay William Bardel the sum of \$4,800 for property loss sustained by him as a result of the war while acting as American consul at Rheims, France, was in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Appropriations to pay claims somewhat similar to this one have been considered as in conflict with the financial program of the President, but at the direction of the President further consideration has been given to Mr. Bardel's claim, and I can now advise you that because of the unusual circumstances surrounding this case there is no objection to the enactment of legislation to pay Mr. Bardel \$4,800 for the purpose indicated, if Congress deems it a just claim.

Sincerely yours,

H. M. LORD, *Director.*

The SECRETARY OF STATE.

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Government. I am obliged to you for the information you have given me regarding the same. I am also glad to hear that you are still in the service of the Government. I am sure that you will continue to do well. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Yours truly,
 Wm. Baird

Wm. Baird
 Secretary of the Board of Education

Mr. D. A. ... I received your letter of the 10th inst. regarding the ... I am glad to hear that you are still in the service of the Government. I am sure that you will continue to do well. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Yours truly,
 Wm. Baird

The Secretary of State