

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 24.

Mr. Randolph's Motion for discharging the Supernumerary Officers, in the additional Army.

House in Committee.

Mr. Randolph said, his object in proposing this amendment to the bill was to consolidate the men already enlisted into as many regiments as they would make, and as there could be no use, but great expense in maintaining the officers who remained, they might be discharged. He believed it would be generally conceded that the number of men now enlisted were not more than sufficient to fill six regiments, but the whole of the officers were appointed and in pay for the twelve regiments—as the recruiting would now be stopped, he was not disposed to see the public money squandered away unnecessarily.

If an invasion should happen there would be need of a much greater quantity than the whole, and then a number adequate to the exigency could be raised—without it, these officers would be useless. To keep up an army of officers without men to command, would be an expensive folly. He could have wished the whole force disbanded, but not being able to obtain that, it became his duty to endeavor to reduce it to the narrowest possible grounds.

Mr. Rutledge said, the bill upon the table was, to him, extremely disagreeable. Coming from that respectable quarter, the committee of defence, and being supported by a number of his friends, he should have been content with giving a bare vote in opposition to it, had not this proposition come forward. He conceived it would be fatal to this country to recede in any one measure of defence: he wished this army to be filled up agreeable to the law as it stood originally, because he sincerely believed it highly probable that it would be wanted. But in addition to a bill which in itself was receding from our original defence, an amendment more fatal still was proposed. Mr. Rutledge believed it much more easy to get men than to get officers. Many gentlemen had made considerable sacrifices to serve the country, they abandoned profitable employments to go into the army, it would therefore be extremely wrong to discharge them before the object was completed, for which their patriotism induced them to enter.

He said however, his feelings should never overcome what he conceived the interests of his country required. But it could never require this party, pitiful economy. Indeed he did not believe it true economy, because if the men were wanted again, the officers would be indispensably necessary; and the recruiting would necessarily be much impeded if they were now discharged, because they would not be induced to engage again in the service.

He believed the resources of this country were far beyond what gentlemen had represented in a late debate: he believed them fully adequate to the maintenance of any army whatever. It talking of our means, it had been insinuated that this was a permanent establishment. It was no such thing. It was an extraordinary army raised for an extraordinary occasion, which occasion was not yet accomplished. Our children, who had been referred to, would never complain of the debt which was left them to pay, when they considered the occasion there was to incur that debt: they would rather regard the attention paid to the permanent interests of the country, with gratitude.

The military art, Mr. Rutledge observed, was a science; gentlemen of the army, if they were continued in their stations, could be acquiring a more competent knowledge in their science in this interim, and fit themselves for usefulness, when they were to be called to action. As for the prejudice of the people to the army—though it was true they were against the standing army, and it was possible they might be, in one state, or in a little corner of that state, generally against all these kinds of preparation, but it was not so universally. He rather believed, in respect to the insults from France, that the sentiments of the public were far in advance of the government, he knew it to be so in South Carolina: they thought the government tardy, and therefore proceeded to measures of defence themselves, tired of waiting for the government.

He lamented that gentlemen, who had always expressed their desire for strong measures, should be prevailed on to take steps which were receding from their former ones. If this were encouraged, the evil would not stop here—every measure of defence would be successively attacked by others, who readily caught at every opportunity. He believed this from the progress which was making towards it. These soldiers were to be disbanded: now the officers were to be discharged: besides this there was a motion laying on the table to recede from another measure of defence (the Sedition Bill) next it would be moved to stop the building of the 74's and when or where would it end, until the total subversion of the whole? If this kind of proceeding was encouraged, it would be impossible to say to what a state of prostration our nation would be brought. He therefore thought his duty called upon him to vote against every innovation upon the system, until the occasion was removed.

Mr. Platt said he had voted against the late resolution to disband the army: the reasons which were urged against that motion, made a strong impression on his mind; and although nearly a week had elapsed, he still retained that impression. It was unnecessary to recapitulate those arguments, he would only observe that the whole course of reasoning against the former resolution appear to him to apply with at least equal force against the present measure. A very considerable expense would have been saved by disbanding the army, and in that point of view alone, the inducement to that measure was strong; but it was contended on very good grounds he believed, that it would indicate a want of union and stability in our councils, which at this particular crisis it was so important to maintain. It appeared to him that the suspension of enlistments by a law of congress was in effect the same the same thing in that point of view, as a law to disband the army; it discovered the same relaxation of spirit, and indicated the same fluctuating policy—And what was the inducement to this measure? The small additional expense of the few soldiers who may be enlisted for three months to come. This, he said, appeared to him to be a pitiful saving indeed; and such as would not justify the government in abandoning that system of measures which had hitherto been so successful, and which had made us strong and so favorable an impression on our enemy. We shall probably know the result of the pending negotiation within three months—if peace and security shall be restored, the army in question would cease with the law which created it; and if a third attempt to negotiate shall fail of success, who is prepared to say that the whole twelve regiments will not be necessary.

There was one point of view he said, in which this subject was not before considered. The President of the United States had informed them that in his judgment, sound policy dictated the renewal of negotiation with France, but that in order to give effect to that negotiation, our whole system of our defensive measures ought to be firmly maintained—in our answer to his speech he explicitly approved of the conduct and views of the President with regard to the mission, and we concur with him in opinion that no relaxation ought to be made in defensive measures—he therefore thought they owed it to the executive, they stood pledged to maintain the ground on which the negotiation was commenced: they were bound he said to afford every advantage in their power to enable the President to bring the negotiation to a favorable conclusion—but by adopting this measure, they certainly did relinquish a part of the ground on which the President had founded his measures: instead of seconding the effort of the President, the present measure would counteract the exertions of the executive arm; and by pursuing this course, said he, we shall assume the responsibility of a measure which must certainly be attended with very important consequences to this country. I think Sir, we ought to allow a fair trial to the negotiation under all possible advantages; and to leave the high responsibility of that measure where it now rests.

Mr. Hartley said he did entertain a hope that this bill would have passed pretty unopposedly, and he was therefore sorry to see any attempt made towards its destruction. The gentleman who had proposed the section had evinced his perfect aversion to any military establishment whatever; he did not wish to have a single officer or soldier, but Mr. H. hoped his attempts towards it would fail, for though he liked the bill he disliked the amendment. These officers were now at their posts: they have been selected with the best aid our executive could have—such as could not be had again—the aid of the wife Washington: if they were dismissed, they would, many of them refuse to return if called for, and a new but less complete selection must be made. This would make the measure an essential injury to the country. Mr. H. said he wished our citizens no more to be disturbed with the unnecessary noise of the drum, and therefore he hoped that recruiting would be suspended, but at present he thought it would be very improper to discharge the officers. On this account he should vote against the proposed section, but in favor of the bill without it.

Mr. Cooper professed himself against the amendment as well as against the whole bill. He was convinced that the prosperity of the United States was intimately connected with this army, and it must be a weakness in the government to relax any part till the object was obtained—if the object was not obtained, how unwise, how undignified would this measure then appear, and thus uncertain, how ill-timed was this relaxing system proposed. It was not wisdom to do to day what must be undone tomorrow. The gentlemen who had proposed this defensive system, and procured its establishment, in his opinion was pulling down what they once with so much wisdom reared by introducing the bill at all.

Mr. C. went into the former debate of the house on the motion for disbanding the army: he considered it an inconsistency in the conduct of gentlemen who opposed that motion to propose this bill. Mr. Otis vindicated himself from the inconsistency charged. As for himself, he said, he was only the humble organ of the committee of defence for whom he reported the bill. But however, it was his own opinion that the bill was proper. As to the amendment he opposed it. The question the other day was to disband the army. That was negatived. Now the motion is to disband a part of it—the officers. If the officers were to be sent home and the staff pulled down and annihilated, he conceived it would be equivalent to disbanding two thirds of the whole army, because the recruiting could not go on as soon as it probably might be wanted. There was no argument, in his opinion, which was used against disbanding the whole army, that could not with equal propriety be applicable to the present motion. He therefore hoped

the dignity of the house would not be so impaired, as it might be by enlarging the discussion of the present motion, but that the question would be taken immediately.

Mr. Harper opposed the proposition, because of the considerable delay such a motion must make if the necessity should return for raising this army. A new selection of officers must be made, for he presumed very few of those discharged would serve again. It was true there were plenty of applications for commissions, but a long time would be necessary to procure the information necessary to make a wise selection. He did not think it an economical measure, for the delay and expense which would accrue in making the arrangements would equal the pay of the officers for the short time they would probably be how in the service.

Mr. Macon could not agree with the gentleman (Mr. Rutledge) that officers were hard to be got during the war there were plenty of able officers to be obtained. Indeed the report of the Secretary of War confirmed the truth of this opinion; there was not a single regiment complete in men, but the whole of the officers were appointed. It was an unnecessary use of money. It had been said to be a small expense—That argument could not warrant the ill use of it. Take care of the pence; the pounds would take care of themselves' was an old but true adage. Therefore no saving whatever was 'pitiful' or 'paltry.'

The gentleman from S. Carolina [Mr. Rutledge] had said it was not a standing army. Mr. Macon did not know what then to call it. It must be a militia army or a regular army: the word regular, applied to the army, had always been considered synonymous with a standing army. They certainly could not be called militia: then they must be regulars, and if regulars, a standing army.

The President, in his opening address to the House, had given advice that the House ought to examine and see where any savings could be made: no doubt he meant to examine into every item of the expenditure. If only the pay of one officer could be saved it would be prudent to do it. He liked the amendment for the principle of it, because it went to lessen the public expenditure: and having failed in the attempt to get the men disbanded, he considered it his duty to come the nearest possible to it and vote for discharging the supernumerary officers. As the enlistments were to be stopped, the officers could be of no use: then why not discharge them?

It had been supposed that these patriotic officers would not return to the service, if this dismissal took place: but that new ones must be sought. Mr. Macon had no doubt but the same patriotism which brought them out on a certain occasion, would induce them to return to their homes if the government had no more need of their services, and that they would as cheerfully return to the service if there ever should be occasion for them, or their patriotism would be very mutable indeed, and unworthy their profession.

Mr. Bayard conceived that a right view of this subject would convince the House that it would be a real saving to keep the officers. From the report of the secretary of war it would appear that the army referred to were at present stationed at great distances; one part from the other. Agreeable to the report of the Secretary of war it appeared that these twelve regiments (or what were enlisted of them) were stationed in the following manner. Three regiments in the vicinity of Providence river, near Uxbridge, Massachusetts. Three regiments in the vicinity of Brunswick, N. Jersey. Three regiments in the vicinity of Potomac, near Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Three regiments in the vicinity of Augusta, above the falls of Savannah.

Were this amendment to pass, Mr. B. said, it would become the executive to take immediate steps to order their removal from their present positions, in order to form them into complete regiments. The expense of removing from their present cantonments, marching forage, &c. must be very considerable. Again—if the officers were to be reduced, could it be done in a minute? How were the executive to determine who of the officers to discharge, and who to retain. If they were to draw lots, it must take considerable time—three or four months would not be sufficient. But on the other hand it was possible that the negotiation might be successful in one month, and if so, they would then be discharged by the law upon the bare wages due to them for the time they saved. But the amendment was calculated to give them a month's pay. Surely from these considerations it would be an eventual saving to keep them until the success of the negotiation is known. But suppose peace was not made with France, would it be prudent in that event to discharge them? Mr. Bayard conceived not; for he had no doubt but they would then think of invading this country, and having that apprehension, he should be sorry to see the country left unprotected; for surely retaining these officers would much facilitate enlistments, if they should be required to go on.

Mr. Claiborne did not know what the expense of removing the army could be more than transporting the baggage. He was not of opinion that it would have any delay about which gentlemen talked so much. If there should be a treaty, they would be discharged by the law—if there should not, and there was no use for them, this measure would certainly facilitate their discharge, because it did not follow of course that they would be wanted, although no treaty might be formed.

Mr. C. did not conceive it necessary to keep these men merely that they should acquire a knowledge of the military art. The science of war could only be obtained in war.

The theory of that art could be as well known out of the army as in it. Nor could he conceive it to be so difficult to procure officers, if they should hereafter be wanted, as had been represented. The Secretary of war had plenty of applicants; and their characters were always portrayed by their friends when they applied for the appointment. It could not therefore be difficult or tedious to make a proper selection, when all the materials were continually in possession of the department.

Mr. Marshall said this was precisely the same question, as had taken up so much time in the House; and had been maturely discussed, and on which a majority of the House had expressed an opinion by rejecting the motion to disband the army. He would call the attention of the House to the particular principle upon which that decision was grounded. It was this. The state of the country at the present moment was such as to leave it absolutely uncertain whether the twelve regiments would or would not be necessary for our defence, but that the period would soon arrive when that uncertainty would be removed. On these grounds it was the determination of the House not to recede from any measure they had ordered, nor to progress, and agreeable to that principle, a bill was reported to suspend the enlistments.

Mr. M. called to the recollection of the House some of the arguments which were used against the motion to disband the army, and applied them to the present amendment. A large majority he said then decided in favor of maintaining exactly the same ground at present, and he presumed no circumstance had appeared to change the opinions of the House on that point. The adoption of the motion would certainly very materially derange the system. Gentlemen supposed the President could re-create the officers. He could not do it without a law to enable him. The original law would have been fully executed, and nothing would remain to do in it, the executive could not therefore create an officer. Besides there would be a great inconsistency; the bill pointed to an event when recruiting must recommence, but the amendment removed that power by taking away the officers who were to execute that service, besides leaving the men recruited (if it were possible) without officers! Thus though the time was appointed, the means were taken away until at a future meeting of Congress an act should be passed to enable him to appoint officers.

If the number of men were never to be increased, then indeed the arguments in favor of discharging the officers would be unanswerable, but in the prospect of such an event as an increase, those arguments must fall.—It was said with propriety, thought prudent to retain the skeleton of an army to enable the President in case of invasion, or actual war, to recommence the recruiting service. It was observed that the same patriotism which called forth the spirit of our citizens to accept of commissions would excite them again to enter into service. Mr. Marshall believed it to be a fact; he believed they would again enter the public service if required: no doubt but they did estimate love of country sufficient to obey the orders of their country, at a time or in any way, but would it be right and proper to call gentlemen from their occupations and families, and dismiss them before the service was performed to which their patriotism called them out, merely because their zeal could be depended on? He hoped the national spirit would never yield to that false policy. He hoped the now existing station would be maintained, and no measure at present be receded from, on which the country had placed their confidence for defence.

Mr. Nicholas did not think, with gentlemen who had spoken against the present amendment, that the same reasons which were used in opposition to the other motion, were also applicable on the present one.—But what would be the operation of the present motion if adopted.

The House had determined that no more men should be raised, even if the negotiation with France should fail, unless the failure was followed by actual war or threatened invasion: if therefore the present motion was rejected, there would be three times the number of officers in the pay of the country, and they must in case the negotiation fail, remain until the next session of Congress, at least necessary for the men. How would this contribute to the strength of the country, or how to another object gentlemen had mentioned, military discipline. These men would always be at their homes, and acquire habits not useful either to themselves or to the country.

It was said that if discharged before the accomplishment of the services for which their patriotism brought them away from their homes, they would be unwilling to return when wanted, and that, when the necessity was most urgent, there would be great delay in procuring others. The gentleman who used this argument has answered it by telling you that the war department has made provision for officering an eventual army of 50,000 men. If so, it could be no difficulty to procure officers at any time. If these officers might not all find it convenient to return, others could be appointed without any trouble or delay, whenever it might be necessary to augment the army.

It is well known that a much more numerous class of citizens were willing to go into the eventual army, (as it is called) provided for time of real danger than into the one now under consideration—therefore, the probability would be in favour of a better selection, for there could be a larger field to choose from.

Again—Most of the officers had most likely tried their efforts at enlistment. Was it not probable that new officers would be likely to draw into the service men who might be attached to them, but who else would not have entered.

If these were found arguments, the article of expense was not the only consideration, but the actual power of the country would be increased in the event of danger.

The gentleman from Delaware, Mr. Nicholas said, used an argument which appeared to him extremely weak. He had said the arrangement now proposed would probably be more expensive than the law as it now stands, for in all likelihood the army will be disbanded by the terms of its enlistment before this law could be executed. How this was to be, he could not conceive. If the occasion for this army should cease before the dismissal of the officers, they would be dismissed under the original law: if it should not, this measure could not increase the expense.

Another objection, and one which was relied upon, was that it would be out of the power of the President to re-appoint the officers, even if he should find occasion to order the enlistments to go on. To this objection it might be answered that the old law would still remain in force and the same power which could direct the enlistments to be made could appoint the officers. Regiments of men were always accompanied with a suitable number of officers, and therefore if the President was empowered from the existence of certain circumstances to raise so many regiments, he was equally empowered to appoint a certain number of officers to command them. Suppose a vacancy happened in the army, the President always had the power to fill it; by the same rule could these appointments take place. But if any gentleman should think the construction of the law would be mistaken in that particular, he might amend it so as to make its operation certain.

Gentlemen appeared to suppose a kind of necessity existed to keep these officers, because their patriotism had called them out. The original contract by which they were brought into the service did not bind the country to keep them longer than the exigencies of the times required; they had therefore no claim upon the country, and it was not consistent with that professed patriotism, to wish to stay in the service a moment longer than they could be serviceable. Mr. N. admitted that they would be under no obligation to return.

Upon the whole, as officers could be of no use to the country without men, and as it would always be easy to procure officers when it might be necessary to raise men, Mr. Nicholas hoped the amendment would be adopted.

(To be continued.)

A JOURNEYMAN PAPER MAKER, Who can work well at the Vat, Will meet with good encouragement by applying at No. 104 North Front Street. December 27 dtf.

To William Wills & John Armstrong.

GENTLEMEN, I HAVE seen your advertisement "To the Public" whereby you offer your services to locate United States Military Land Warrants, and in which you assert that you "possess superior information to any others" and that you can locate warrants "the most advantageously"—As I believe you have not explored more of the Military District than some other persons who also offer their services to locate warrants—permit me to suggest the propriety of altering your advertisement, so as to do justice to those whose knowledge of the Military Land, is at least equal to that which you possess. I do not mean that all who advertise as locaters are superior, or even equal to you, in the knowledge of it. I see advertisements by persons who have never explored a single range, and by others who have been over but a small part of the Military Land—so your advertisement would apply; but as you claim all other locaters as inferior to yourselves, I have taken the liberty of giving you the above advice, which if attended to with candour will, for the present satisfy. A LOCATER. February 5.

February 5.

CAUTION.

THE Public is cautioned against receiving the Subscribers Note in favor of, and indorsed by, Thomas W. Francis, dated yesterday, at 6c days after date for eight hundred dollars. The note is in the hand writing of the Subscriber, and at the bottom a memorandum by the indorser, to the credit of the drawer, Thomas W. Francis. This note together with a contract between Charles Williamson, and Charles Hale for lands in township, No. 4, in the 1st range of Stricker county, State of New Jersey, and several other papers contained in a Pocket Book, were taken from the Subscriber's desk last evening. As the above can be of no use to the person who has carried them off, should they be returned, no questions shall be asked. SAMUEL MIFFLIN. February 6. dtf.

February 6. dtf.

THE UNDERSIGNED, His Swedish Majesty's Consul General, and authorized to transact the Consular Business, for His Majesty the King of Denmark in the United States of America, residing at Philadelphia,

Hereby gives public Notice,

That in obedience to recent instructions received from his government, it is the duty of all Masters of Swedish and Danish vessels, before their sailing from any port in the said States, to call upon him or the Vice Consul in order to be granted such Certificates for their Cargoes, which the exigency of the late of the Neutral Commerce and the former Decrees of the Belligerent Powers, render indispensably necessary, and that any Master of vessels belonging to the respective nations, or navigating under the protection of their flags, in omitting to take such certificates, will personally stand responsible for the consequences.

RICHARD SODERSTROM, Philadelphia, 18th Decemr, 1799.