

Gazette of the United States.

A NATIONAL PAPER, PUBLISHED WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS BY JOHN FENNO, No. 34, NORTH FIFTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

[No. 63 of Vol. IV.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1793.

[Whole No. 385.]



CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
Friday, December 28.

REDUCTION OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

Mr. Steele, agreeably to notice, called up his motion, which is in the following words: "Resolved, that a committee be appointed to prepare and bring in a bill, to reduce the military establishment of the United States to regiments or corps, consisting each of non-commissioned officers, privates, and musicians, with such proportion of commissioned officers, as the President may think proper to continue in service; and to repeal so much of an act passed the 5th of March, 1792, intitled "An act for making further and more effectual provision for the protection of the frontiers of the United States," as may contravene this intention.

Mr. Steele declared he did not rise to say much on this motion. The opinions of members must be made up from observations on facts that have come within their own knowledge, therefore, what he could advance, he did not suppose, would change their opinions. The house is in possession of the motion, and every member stands responsible to his constituents, and to his own conscience for the part he shall act upon it.

He prefaced some observations on the nature of governments in the progress of their administration. Time brings abuses into most, and he never was so sanguine, he said, as to expect, that the federal government would be exempt from them. But when abuses did creep into the administration of a government, silence he considered as criminal, and a quiet acquiescence worse;—a free people, however, were incapable of seeing them without remonstrating, and the people of America possessed enough of the true spirit of freemen, not to suffer the progress of a ruinous war system, or to bear the burthen imposed on them to support expensive projects of ambition without remonstrating. The people of the United States are peaceful, they are attached from education and habit to regularity and peace; he was sorry, he said, that part of our administration did not appear to be guided by the same spirit. Chimerical projects had been set on foot without regard to the public opinion;—armies have been raised and maintained without affording protection to the frontiers, and the expence of this system has justly roused the indignation of our citizens. The motto of a republic should be 'Economy and Peace.' With these cardinal qualities, any nation may be happy, without them no government can be tolerable. He should proceed, he said, to enquire how far they had dictated the measures of our government. For this purpose he turned to the approbations, for the purpose of defraying the expences of the Indian war. He read some notes, taken from the existing laws of appropriation and the estimate presented for the ensuing year, from which it appeared, That

For 1789, 137,000 dolls. were appropriated for the war dep. & 20,000 for treaties.	
90, 181,792	20,000
91, 702,885 74cts.	20,000
92, 1,205,949 76	25,000
93, 1,171,719	50,000

Making a total of 3,534,347 : 200 for the support of the system since the establishment of this young government. He invited the house to take notice of this enormous sum; the public, he said, had done so already; and this money had been or was to be appropriated without

scarcely enquiring how former appropriations had been applied. He hoped the house would do something to check this growing evil; if they did not, he should invite, he said, the Secretary at war himself, to take a retrospect for 20 years into the history of the frontier, and enquire into the expence of defending it when the defence was entrusted to each individual state, and to compare that expence with what has already been incurred under the present system. It would be difficult, he said, to point out and justify the causes of their material difference. There was no good reason why so expensive a system as that now pursued should be necessary; and if the expences of the war-department could not be reduced, the country, he conceived, would not be able to bear them.

His motion was intended, and his motives in making it, were, to afford effectual protection to the frontier, to diminish the expence at present incurred for that object, and apply the savings to the reduction of the public debt. He was firmly of opinion that if an economical system was pursued, the defence of the frontiers could be effected and a sinking fund established that would begin to operate 4 or 5 years sooner than was at present contemplated by the secretary of the treasury, and that without any additional tax. He could not approve of any sinking fund that must be entirely supported by new taxes—much less of one which was to depend solely on loans.

He next turned to the mode of warfare adopted since the establishment of the federal government against the Indians. The history of the frontier from Braddock's defeat to the present day amply proved, that regular armies are improper for that kind of war. If this history had been attended to, and the fate of that commander had been considered and placed to its true cause, three millions of dollars and many valuable lives might have been saved to the United States. A regular army is an expensive machine, and in its operations unwieldy and tardy, composed of men without the necessary enterprize, constitution and activity to combat a savage foe, accustomed to fatigue and fighting for their all.

He quoted a passage from a communication from the Secretary of war himself to the house, to shew the opinion he entertained of the enemy. Their sobriety and activity, and our ignorance of the country and mode of warfare. The house, he said, had not sufficiently attended to the inadequateness of regular armies in opposition to such an enemy, as demonstrated by experience, and that pernicious facility of borrowing had induced to pass with too little difficulty appropriation upon appropriation, to pursue it. If taxes had been demanded to make these provisions perhaps the legislature, he suggested, would have been more cautious how they proceeded.

He again adverted to the mode of warfare which regular armies necessitated; one expedition can only be effected in one year, and indeed, it had been found, that even one could not be accomplished this year; but one expedition could afford no effectual protection to the frontier. Besides the motions of a regular army are easily watched and known; Indians, well knowing when to expect their enemy, will collect in full force, and beat us as they have done, and will do again, if the same system is pursued,

He was of opinion, that if such a measure would be admissible on principles of benevolence and policy, that the Indian war might be formed to the state of Kentucky, and completely terminated, for one half of the sum now about to be appropriated to support the present futile system. He appealed for the justice of the position to those gentlemen acquainted with the feelings and habits of the people of that state.

Upon the success of his motion he conceived the success of the war depended. Regular troops could never fight in the woods. If the system is not changed the war will be a seven or ten years war. Active and enterprising frontier militia alone were equal to opposing Indians.

In his motion, as offered, there was, he said, a blank for the number of regiments to remain on foot. He should propose, at a proper time, he intimated, to fill this blank up with *two*, which would give 2120 privates, regulars, quite enough, even if the President should think it necessary to garrison all the posts which have been established for the protection of the frontiers.

He enumerated these posts as follows: Fayette, Hamilton, Stuben, Knox, Tammany, Telfair, Harmar, Franklin, Jefferson, St. Clair, Marietta, Massachusetts, Matthews and Knoxville.

Abandoning the system of active expeditions by regular troops, and giving to each of these an equal portion of the 2128 men, composing the two regiments, each post would be protected by 152 privates. This number would be quite sufficient, and greater than that now defending some of those posts: But he wished it left discretionary with the President to distribute them.

He stated, that the only objection of the secretary at war, even to employing the militia in this war, was the expence. He wished to refute that objection, and went into a reasoning of some length on the subject. Regular troops, when enlisted, must be paid, clothed, &c. during the whole time of their enlistment, whether in actual service or not; the militia, tho' more expensive while on foot; yet being on the spot, executing an expedition in forty or fifty days, then returning to their homes, and immediately on their return being out of pay, would be found in the end much less expensive as well as much more effectual. Five expeditions, he computed, could be made in each year by a militia on or near the frontier, and 30,000 dollars he set down as sufficient to pay the expence of each of these expeditions.

To give an idea of the expence of regular troops, and to shew the alarming progress of expence on this score, since the establishment of the new government, he gave the following items from appropriation laws past, and reports of estimates of what will be necessary for the ensuing year.

Contingencies for the War Department.	
For 790 including expresses, &c	3 000
91	5 000
92	20 000
Estimate for 93	50 000
Quarter Master's Department.	
Appropriations for 1790	15 000
91	25 000
92	50 000
Estimate for 93	100 000
Hospital Department.	
Appropriations for 1790	1 000
91	1 635 20
92	6 000
Estimate for 93	25 000
Ordnance Department.	
Appropriations for 1790	7646 66
91	6303 66
92	7204 64
Estimate for 93	23,835 64

The provision for the last mentioned department, he conceived, bore a very ludicrous appearance. He considered it as absurd to attempt fighting Indians with artillery. Not all the artillery of Europe would avail against such a foe. He could not see that either reason or policy would warrant an appropriation of upwards of 23,000 dollars in the present session for the purchase of artillery for such a war. And added that it seemed strange, that the ordnance procured by the United States to carry on the British war had not

been sufficient to defend the Frontier garrisons, without calling upon the government to appropriate in four years the sum of 44,988 dollars for this purpose.

He next turned to the pay, subsistence and cloathing the troops. He premised on this head, that it was well worth considering, whether those articles kept up an exact proportion with the encrease of the troops, in the items he shall give;—they certainly should, he conceived. If the proportion of the sums latterly appropriated according to estimates for these articles proved greater, there must be, he contended, abuse somewhere, and it certainly is the duty of the House of Representatives to examine where the blame lies.

Pay of the Troops		Subsistence.
Appro. 90	59,028	42,552
91	74,916	59,787
92	102,686	119,688
Est. for 93	304,308	312,567 75
Cloathing.		Total.
24,440		126,020
23,772 80		158,475 80
48,000		270,374
112,000		728,875 75

He was at some loss to account for the want of proportion in the items above stated, compared with the number of troops employed,—perhaps more officers were under pay than the public service required; these things deserve thorough investigation.

He proceeded to shew what would be saved to the United States by a change of system. He shewed, by a quotation from a report of the Secretary of the Treasury, that it was the opinion of that officer, that the current service of the ensuing year would probably require the whole of the revenue; but that he contemplates a valuable surplus for the redemption of the debt should a termination be put to the Indian war. He made some observations on the importance of redeeming the public debt, as speedily as possible, and complimented the Secretary of the Treasury, in respect to the disposition he had shewn on this subject.

He was of opinion, that with peace and economy the resources of the country would be sufficient to accomplish its total redemption in ten years, by purchases and regular instalment payments.—Under the present system of warfare, a beginning cannot be made without levying a new tax, and a new tax cannot be granted, until the abuses of the war department are considered and corrected.

He proceeded to shew the economical effect of the reduction he proposed, on our finances, by comparing the appropriation of 92 with the estimate for 93 for the war department.

Contingent Expences,	
As settled at the treasury,	
1792,	10,229
Per estimate 1793,	50,000
Difference	39,771
Quarter-Master's Department.	
1792,	50,000
1793,	100,000
Difference	50,000
Hospital Department.	
1792,	6,000
1793,	25,000
Difference	19,000
Forage for Cavalry, &c.	
1792,	4,152
1793,	44,856
Difference	40,704
Ordnance Department.	
The whole provision for this department, he conceived, might go out however, to pursue his plan, he took the difference,	
1792,	7,204,640
1793,	23,135,640
Difference	16,631

[See last page.]