

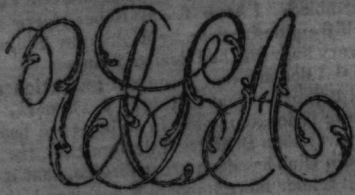
# Gazette of the United States.

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## CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SATURDAY, January 5.

CONTINUATION OF THE

DEBATE ON MR. STEELE'S MOTION,  
FOR REDUCING THE ARMY.

MR. MOORE said, the resolution as worded, contemplates the reduction of the army to two regiments. No reasons have been introduced for this measure, which were not brought forward in the first discussion of the subject. He thought that the reasons for continuing the army, existed with additional force. He observed, that granting abuses had taken place, it was no good reason for repealing a law. If abuses do exist, which he by no means thought to be fact, this was not the way to correct those abuses. But he insisted, that the mode proposed as a substitute for carrying on the war, was the way to encrease those abuses—the opportunities would be encreased—and the means greatly diminished, by reason of the distance, of detecting & preventing them. He enlarged on this idea; and then entered into a consideration of the question, whether the militia or the regular troops were the most eligible to be employed in an Indian war?—He stated the difficulties and expences arising from the militia system—it would be much greater than it has ever yet been. Adverting to the system adopted by Congress, he observed that two objects appeared to have been in view at that time—those objects exist at the present moment; they have reference to two species of force—a defensive, and an incurive. He said if no other than a militia was contemplated, the Indians would never make a permanent peace. The incursions of the militia, and the burning of their towns, will never bring the Indians to terms—permanent posts must be established; a respectable force must be fixed in their neighborhood. He alluded to the treaties which had already been made—the repeated violations of those treaties. Fear only can keep the savages within any bounds. Nothing else can effect a lasting peace. A permanent regular force is then the necessary result—the experience of the French, Spaniards and English, sufficiently enforce the propriety and necessity of regular troops. Here he entered into a consideration of the difference between such regular troops as he contemplated, and those to which gentlemen appeared to be opposed. Added to the advantages of discipline, the regular troops may be trained to fight the Indians in their own way, to greater purpose than any militia ever can. On the whole, he was clearly of opinion that the present was not the time to reduce the military force of the country—and should therefore vote against the motion.

Mr. Williamson so far supported the motion, as to suggest the reducing the number of officers on the regular establishment, to the number of men in actual service, and to stop recruiting after the month of March.

Mr. Madison said the present discussion involved a revival of the question agitated the last session, whether the militia or regular troops were to be preferred in carrying on the Indian war?—It is said that this is not the time to reduce the military force of the country—that the President is invested with the power of reducing the army—that while important negotiations are pending, it will be attended with inauspicious effects to lessen the impressions of our power on the mind of the Indians. These considerations, he acknowledged to be weighty—but if the force of the country can be continued on as respectable a footing as at present, and at the same time the expence greatly diminished, the government would be inexcusable not to do it. It is supposed that this may be done in perfect consistency with impressing the enemy with the fullest impression of our power. He suggested therefore the eligibility of completing the effective force by the addition of volunteer militia—to organize completely the regular troops already raised—and to restrict them to the number that they at present consist of. To reduce this idea to effect, he suggested to the gentleman from North-Carolina a modification of his motion, by an amendment in conformity to these ideas.

Mr. Steele said he was perfectly in sentiment with the gentleman, in regard to the propriety of inserting an amendment to the motion, which might secure a sufficient appropriation to carry on offensive operations against the hostile Indians, by the militia of the frontiers; and if an alteration was proposed to that effect, he would second it. The at-

ention of the House to this question speaks its importance; it is probable, one more important will not occur during the present session. On its decision are suspended the hopes and fears of the people of this country, their hopes of a speedy and honorable peace, and their fears of a standing army, with its usual retinue of political evils.

The present is regarded as an interesting epoch in the affairs of the United States; and it has been perceived, with serious regret, that while our national character is forming (he hoped it was not yet formed) it seems to partake in some respects more of the unnatural spirit of monarchy, than of the mild and conciliatory temper of a republic. The principle of keeping up standing armies, though highly obnoxious to the great body of the people, has not been equally so to the government; they have been maintained and encreased without affording protection, or even defence to the frontiers; the supplies necessary to support the establishment, begins to discover an alarming derangement of the public finances, and it is now incumbent on the House of Representatives to check this growing mischief.

Mr. Steele then adverted to the effects of standing armies on the morals and political sentiments of the people, wherever they had been employed; of the expensiveness of all such establishments, and of the wicked purposes to which they had been, and might be subservient. He said, he had prepared himself to have spoken largely to this point, and to have quoted the pernicious effects of such a policy in other nations; but the debate having been already lengthy, and the committee probably fatigued, it would be sufficient for his present purpose for the members to make their own reflections, and to mark the rapid progression of the army from 1789 to 1792, both in numbers and expences. Instances from foreign history are superfluous, when our own affords such ample testimony. The establishment began with one regiment, it is now five; and the House was called on in 1789 to appropriate a little more than 100,000 dollars for that department, in the present year above one million is demanded. The reason of this extraordinary additional expenditure, this unexpected encrease of the army, if not enveloped in darkness, has been founded on policy hitherto not satisfactorily explained. He said, however lightly he was disposed to touch this part of the subject, he could not avoid reminding the committee of the memorable sentiments of 1776, in regard to standing armies; of the universal abhorrence of the Americans to them at that time; and to illustrate it more clearly, he read the expressions of some of the states in their Bills of Rights. These were the sentiments of the whigs of 1776, and to such whigs he wished to appeal on this occasion.

He also reminded the committee of the recent debates of 1788, of the amendments proposed in several state conventions, of the unanimity which prevailed among all ranks of people on this particular point; and it is now to be lamented, said he, that while the ink which recorded these objections to the constitution is yet drying, the evil then predicted has taken place.

If there is a subject on which much deliberation is unnecessary, in order to forming a right opinion, it would be in regard to military establishments; the feelings of a free people revolt at their continuance; and every man who reads, or thinks, can point out their dangers.

He said, he felt more anxiety for the fate of this motion, than commonly marks his conduct, because this is the last session that will ever afford him an opportunity to trouble the House with his sentiments on this, or any other subject. The motion was brought forward to discharge a duty which he owed to his constituents, to satisfy his own conscience, and to afford that protection to the frontiers which they deserved, and to save the public money. If an uncommon degree of zeal was discovered in supporting the motion, it ought to be attributed to these, and no other motives.

The question will now soon be taken—if adopted, I shall be among those who rejoice; if rejected, among those who have always submitted with a proper degree of decency to the decision of the majority. But in any event, the public will know that we have asserted the sense of the people against standing armies, that we are anxious to defend the frontiers against their enemies, that we have recommended a system of economy and efficiency, instead of profusion and delay, that we have recommended a system calculated to produce victory and peace, instead of disgrace and war, and that we wish to rescue the government from the intoxication of the times, and all the apery of military establishments.

He said, he had been attentive to the arguments of the opposition, and they tend principally to four points. If neither of these positions be found tenable, the motion will certainly succeed; and that they are not tenable, is believed and will be shewn.

1st. It has been boldly asserted that the President is the author of the existing system. 2dly. They call in question the sincerity of our declarations in wishing to afford effectual protection to the frontiers.

3dly. They deny the competency of the militia.

4thly. The impolicy of reducing the establishment, when a treaty is expected.

In regard to the first, we deny that the President is the author of this plan of prosecuting the war, not having avowed explicitly himself that he is so, & no document appearing to confirm that opinion, we are justified in attributing a system which appears to us ineffectual, to his Secretary and not to him.

It is true that the Secretary is only a finger of his hand, and the intimate connexion which must of necessity subsist between them, perhaps is the ground upon which the assertion has been made. The Secretaries are all equally near to the President, and if it be admitted that he is the author of this, he may with equal propriety, be said to have been the author of every system on general subjects which either of them have recommended.

Was he the author of the report on the fisheries? Was he the author of the plan for establishing the National Bank? It is known that he was not, and circumstances might be mentioned (which are withheld from delicacy) to confirm this opinion.

Was he the author of the funding system? Some gentlemen in the opposition to this motion, would not be willing to give the President that credit if he claimed it; and some who support this motion, would not only be sorry that the President had even claimed such a credit, but believe that it was in no respect attributable to him. The same gentleman (Mr. Wadsworth) who first asserted that the President was the author of this military plan, in the same speech admitted it to be the war, as well as the plan of the house, and then argued on the necessity of stability in our measures. It is not very material to the present question whose plan it is; being a public measure, we are justified in offering our objections to it; and this is the first time that I have heard it publicly asserted that a government should persevere in an error, because they had undertaken it. If the plan be a good one, it may be supported by reason; if a bad one, no name ought to be called in to prop it up.

The inconsistency of that gentleman's (Mr. Wadsworth) arguments not only supports the motion before the committee, but shews the wretched shifts which have been used to defeat it.

It has been said in the course of the debate, that individual members, and even this house, are incompetent to decide upon the efficacy or inefficacy of military plans. In answer to this it may be said, that if we are not all Generals, we are all members, and that we have the privilege of thinking for ourselves and for our constituents. To admit this doctrine in the latitude which has been expressed, would be to introduce military ideas indeed; it would be to make soldiers of us, instead of legislators; nay worse than that, it would be to revive the exploded doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance.

In regard to the sincerity of his intentions to afford effectual protection to the frontiers, Mr. Steele said that he had been sufficiently explicit, that a feeling for the sufferers had dictated this motion; that he was sorry it had been whispered in the ears of some of the members, that it was intended to withhold the necessary appropriations, and divert them to other purposes.

If two regiments were insufficient to garrison all the posts necessary for defence, he would even under certain restrictions, consent to continue the three sub-legions, thereby enabling the President to establish double the number of posts now erected if he should deem it advisable. Regular troops being incapable of active expeditions against Indians in the wilderness, his wish was to abandon that system, and confine them entirely to the garrison.

The next objection to the motion is the incompetency of the militia, and to support this opinion the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Wadsworth) has made this expression, "that as to the expedition under General St. Clair, the regulars were few, and not to be named when compared with the number of the militia." The truth is there was not a man engaged that day as a militia man, except the advance guard commanded by Col. Oldham, which consisted of 300, perhaps a few more, the field return of the day preceding the action being in the war-office, this can be ascertained with precision. The balance of the army on that unfortunate day, had been enlisted as regulars, even clothed as regulars, were fought as regulars, and poor fellows, died like regulars. They suffered the fate which awaits every regular army destined for similar expeditions. Even the handful of militia employed that day, did not deserve that name, they were chiefly substitutes for draughted men from the ceded territory. This draught became unavoidable, from a misfortune to General Scriver, which Mr. Steele related.

The attack on Major Adair has also been mentioned as a proof of the incompetency of mili-

tia and Mr. Steele insisted that the only inference which could be drawn from thence was, that 200 militia were able to repel, but not destroy near 200 Indians.—This event he conceived was in favor, and not against his motion.

He next adverted to the argument of Mr. Wadsworth, in regard to the war of 1762; of the establishment of posts in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and of the success of Colonel Bouquet's expedition. If two worn-out regiments at that time were sufficient to defend the frontiers, and with the aid of the militia, to terminate the war, two new regiments, in them, all the vigour which the gentleman ascribed to now possess, with the aid of established posts, and a much more effective militia, can certainly be equal to the same end. After examining Mr. W.'s arguments for some time, Mr. Steele said, that when analyzed, it would be found, that they proved more than they were intended to prove; but the merits of this motion did not require that he should take advantage of these indiscretions.

He shewed from the history of 1762, that those posts were established, with a handful of regular troops in each, they never answered the purpose of effectual protection; but the frontier people were always obliged, in a great degree, to defend themselves; that they were best calculated for that service, and that they would perform it now with alacrity and success, if well rewarded.

Mr. Steele then refuted the objection against the militia on account of their waste and expence which Mr. W. had alluded to. The law allows a mounted volunteer, furnishing himself with a good horse, good arms, provisions, and every other necessary, except ammunition, at his own risk and expence, one dollar per day. The exact expence of such an expedition, can be calculated. Whether successful or not, the charge to the public cannot be encreased. The contractors, quarter-master's and hospital departments are all avoided, with the abuses, expences and frauds attending such establishments. Mr. Steele enlarged upon this point, and said that these are always found to be the most expensive departments in any army, and that the federal treasury had felt their effects already. In favor of the militia it may be asked, who fought the battle of Bunker's Hill? Who fought the battle of New-Jersey? Who have fought the Indians so often with success, under General's Wilkinson, Scott, Sever and others? Who marched in 1776 under General Rutherford, through the Cherokee nation, laid waste their country, and forced them to peace? Who fought the battles of Georgia, under Clark and Twiggs? Who fought the battles of South-Carolina, under the command of an honorable member, now present? Delicacy forbids to enlarge upon his successes in his presence.

Who fought the ever memorable battles of Cowpens, King's Mountain, Hanging Rock, Blacklocks; the Pivots, on which the revolution turned in the southern States? In short, who fought all the battles of the southern States, while we had a mere handful of regular troops, scarcely the shadow, much less the reality of an army?

They were all fought by freemen, the substantial freeholders of the country: men attached to the revolution from principle: men who were sensible of their rights, and fought for them.

Such men will not enlist in regular armies, nor will any one who has the disposition, or the constitution of a freeman. It would give me pain to describe the trash which composes all regular armies: They enlist for three dollars a month; which, in a country like the United States, is a sufficient description of their bodies as well as their minds. Such men are not fit to combat the most active enemy in the world. Here Mr. Steele read Major Gaither's and Major Trueman's depositions, respecting the defeat of the 4th November, 1791, stating, that they could not see the Indians, because they were behind trees, &c. that the regular troops tried, but could not fight that way; that they seemed to be stupid, and incapable of resistance; and that if any General in the world had commanded such men that day, he must have been defeated as they were.

An additional argument, and one of the most weighty too, against regular expeditions, in this species of warfare, is that by the slowness of their movements, the force of the enemy may be concentrated,—time is afforded them to form alliances, and to confederate against those whom they consider a common enemy. It is otherwise with militia incursions. He offered a number of reasons to shew that it was so, and how essential for the interest of the United States, to adopt a policy calculated to detach the tribes from each other as much as possible.

But it has been said these men were not regular troops. Mr. Steele asked, what then were they? They surely were not militia.

The last objection, and the least serious of all, to this motion, is the expectations of a treaty in the spring. Mr. Steele said, if he thought the gentleman who threw this difficulty in the way, believed himself that we have any reason to expect a permanent peace from the treaty now proposed, it may deserve an answer. Facts are more to be relied upon than words: from the channel through which these propositions have come—from the whole complexion of their talks, and from the late attack on Major Adair, it may safely be asserted, that no peace can be effected in the spring.

He recapitulated some of the difficulties which this motion had to conflict, and said, that he