

4-25-1840

Arms for inhabitants of Iowa

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Recommended Citation

H.R. Rep. No. 489, 26th Cong., 1st Sess. (1840)

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ARMS FOR INHABITANTS OF IOWA.

APRIL 25, 1840.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. W. THOMPSON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT :

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of certain citizens of the Territory of Iowa, praying to be supplied with arms, recommend that the prayer of the petitioners be not granted, the Secretary of War having already established a depot of arms, &c., in that Territory.

WASHINGTON CITY, *March 21, 1840.*

SIR: The subject of furnishing arms to the militia of Iowa, to enable the people of that Territory to defend the country and themselves, in case of an Indian war upon that frontier, has been referred to your committee.

To you, this may seem to be a subject of but little importance; but to those who are daily exposed to the depredations of the large and warlike tribes of Indians, constantly accumulating upon our frontier, it is of the deepest interest. Independent of the possibility of a war with England, (in which event not a doubt is entertained of the whole northern and western frontier being lighted with the torch of war), the concentrating of so many tribes of Indians upon our borders, the dissatisfaction manifested by some, and the differences existing among others, in conjunction with the fact, that the English traders are understood to be tampering with those of the northwest, certainly show the necessity of making some preparations for the defence of that country.

Shall we, at the distance of nearly two thousand miles from the seat of Government, wait in our exposed condition until the war-whoop is sounded in our ears? Shall we wait until the Indians embody themselves in an army, and march upon the defenceless inhabitants of that Territory, from whence you have received since 1838, more than a million and a half of money, to replenish your exhausted Treasury? Shall we plead with public officers only for the munitions of war, until the time for their use is at hand, and conscious of our exposed frontier, await and depend upon the national arm? I ask, will you hesitate placing at the disposal of the Legislature of that Territory, the munitions of war, when you are told that they feel themselves fully able and willing, to defend the frontier inhabi-

tants from any incursions by Indians, if you will but give them the means? If you refuse them this request, remember, that ere long it may be regretted in both a pecuniary and national point of view.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
W. W. CHAPMAN.

HON. CAVE JOHNSON,
Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs.

*Memoranda of arms which are available for the defence of the country near
St. Louis, Missouri.*

In deposit at the St. Louis arsenal—

51,000 muskets,

2,200 rifles,

100 pistols,

470 sabres,

23,000 pounds musket powder,

7,000 pounds rifle powder,

1,373,000 musket cartridges,

788,000 musket and rifle flints.

Ordered from New York depot to St. Louis arsenal and which will probably reach there this month—

300 pistols,

100 carbines.

A large number of accoutrements (10,000) are at St. Louis, and any quantity can be sent from Pittsburg, at short notice.

G. TALCOTT, *Lt. Col. Ordnance.*

ORDNANCE OFFICE, April 2, 1840.

In addition to this a building is undergoing repair at Rock island, to be made a depot of arms for the Territory of Iowa, agreeably to a resolution of that Legislature requesting that arms should be deposited there for the use of the militia of Iowa, in the event of their being required.

In the opinion of the department, to distribute arms to the citizens of the Territory would be an improvident measure, and that it is inexpedient to form more than one depot for arms and munitions of war; and that the one indicated by the Legislature and Governor of Iowa, is adapted to the use of the Territory.

J. R. POINSETT.