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## Infantry Branch of the Army

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 10, 1886.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MANDERSON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 137.]

*The Committee on Military Affairs, to which was submitted the bill (S. 137) to increase the efficiency of the infantry branch of the Army, respectfully submit the following report:*

The object of this bill is to increase the efficiency of the infantry arm of the service, and thereby that of the entire Army of the United States.

The change proposed is from the single battalion now composing a regiment to a regimental line of three battalions, placing an infantry regiment on the same footing with a regiment of cavalry or of artillery in the matter of its organization.

The bill also provides that appointments to the original vacancies, above the grade of second lieutenants, which would be created by this bill, shall be filled by seniority in the infantry branch.

The effect of this would be to relieve the stagnation in promotion that now exists in the infantry arm, which tends to apathy and inefficiency. Promotion, however, would be merely an incident to the adoption of the "system" contemplated, which has become an imperative military necessity produced by the changed conditions in modern warfare. Fifty captains would be made majors; one hundred first lieutenants would become captains; one hundred and fifty second lieutenants would be made first lieutenants, and two hundred second lieutenants would be commissioned; provided it should be deemed best to fully officer the proposed third battalion of each regiment.

Your committee came to the consideration of this bill (S. 137) under a full sense of its importance, and after a careful examination of its merits, the effect of promotion under it on the *esprit de corps* of the Army, with a jealous regard for the increased expense which its provisions would entail, it is constrained to conclude that the sound military policy embodied in this measure should find favor at the hands of this Congress.

The nation which prepares for war in time of peace is no less sagacious than prudent and economical.

Your committee find it impossible to elaborate the reasons for the conclusion reached within the compass of an ordinary report, and hence present a line of general observation only, which will suggest itself to those who shall give the subject the attention it merits.

The policy of the country being to dispense with a large standing army; to maintain a force just sufficient to suppress Indian raids and internal local dissension, the regular military force of the nation is a mere skeleton of an army, valuable in any great emergency for leavening purposes, serving as a rallying point in such cases for an increased force. Under such circumstances it is important that the small force under arms should be brought to the very highest point of efficiency, and there maintained.

For twenty years the infantry branch of the service in this country has stood still so far as any effort may have been made by Congress to add to its strength by reorganization or by the substitution of a change of "system."

The ten-company single-battalion organization adopted by this country sixty-five years ago, discarded by all civilized European nations, retained by China and Persia, is still maintained by this country!

From a military standpoint, this alone is a commentary on, and it should be an incentive to, action on the part of Congress.

When it is considered that in all armies the infantry takes the lead, being, according to an able writer on modern tactics, "the main-stay and backbone of all," its efficiency becomes a matter of the greatest importance.

To the infantry branch, the action of all others is subordinated. The brunt of battle falls upon the infantry; it suffers most in action and on line of march, and upon its tactics the whole superstructure of military operations is built.

It is the judgment of the most eminent military authorities that the army cannot attain a high degree of efficiency with the infantry branch organized on the present obsolete "system," besides which, the rate of mortality in closed ranks of double file is greatly increased since the adoption of the breech-loading long-range weapons.

This has caused the abandonment by foreign powers of the "system" in vogue here, which it is the object of this bill to reorganize.

Among the first and most important recommendations in the report to Congress, made by the military commission sent abroad from this country, published in 1877, is the change of system contemplated by this bill.

A paragraph from that report (Upton's *Armies of Asia and Europe*) shows the organization of the infantry branch of the service abroad:

The infantry of the German Empire consists, in time of peace, of one hundred and forty-eight regiments of three battalions each. (Page 192.)

The influence of the Franco-Prussian war in producing modification in military organization is nowhere more perceptible than in the French infantry. Four companies were substituted for six in the composition of a battalion, and a regiment was ordered to be made of four battalions. Since that time the three-battalion organization has been adopted by France. (Page 226.)

In Russia the regiments of the three divisions of the guard and the six divisions of the army of the Caucasus have four battalions of four companies each. All other regiments have three battalions of five companies each. (Page 149.)

The Austrian infantry is organized into regiments composed of five field battalions of four companies each and one depot battalion of five companies. In case of war the six battalions are organized into two regiments of three battalions each, the fifth company of the depot battalion remaining as a common depot for both regiments. (Page 162.)

In Italy a battalion consists of four companies and a regiment of three battalions and a depot. The riflemen regiments are composed of four battalions each. (Page 102.)

How completely the army of Japan has been Europeanized may be inferred from the organization of the infantry. A regiment consists of three battalions of four companies each. (Page 9.)

As long ago as in 1869 General W. T. Sherman, then in command, suggested a change in our "system," which received the approval of the Secretary of War.

In 1874-75 General Sherman said :

Inasmuch as the Regular Army will naturally form the standard of organization for any increase or for new regiments of volunteers, it becomes important to study this subject in the light of past experience and to select that form which is best for peace as well as war. A cavalry regiment is now composed of twelve companies, usually divided into six squadrons of two companies each, or better, subdivided into three battalions of four companies each. This is an excellent form, easily admitting of subdivision as well as union into larger masses.

The ten-company organization is awkward in practice, and I am satisfied that the infantry regiment should have the same identical organization as exists for the cavalry and artillery, namely, twelve companies, so as to be susceptible of division into three battalions of four companies each. These companies should habitually be about one hundred men strong, giving twelve hundred to a regiment, which in practice would settle down to about one thousand men. Three such regiments would compose a brigade, three brigades a division, and three divisions a corps. Then by allowing to an infantry corps a brigade of cavalry and six batteries of field artillery, we would have an efficient *corps d'armée* of thirty thousand men, whose organization would be simple and most efficient, and whose strength should never be allowed to fall below twenty-five thousand men.

In 1880, and again in 1882, was this proposed change adverted to by the General of the Army ; and again in 1883 he said :

On the 8th of February, 1884, I will attain the limit of age fixed by Congress for military service in the Army, and I purposely asked of the President the privilege of anticipating this date to enable my successor to make such recommendations as he may deem necessary ; but before leaving I beg to record an expression of opinion that it will be found wise to provide a common organization for all arms of the service, namely :

That each regiment of infantry be composed of twelve companies, the same as now with the artillery and cavalry, making three battalions, each of four companies in time of peace, and of eight in time of war ; that each company shall have a hundred men ; and that in time of peace two of these battalions (eight companies) shall be maintained on a perfect war footing, while the other battalion (four companies) may be a mere skeleton with its complement of officers, and used as a nucleus for recruits. In this battalion can be placed the officers and soldiers invalidated by hard service or sickness, and such as are not weaned of home influence or family importunity.

Were such an organization to be sanctioned by Congress, the military peace establishment could, I believe, be maintained on the present estimates, and would possess the inestimable advantage of admitting of an increase without "disorder or confusion" to 6,000 artillery, 12,000 cavalry, and 30,000 infantry by the mere scratch of a pen and the magic wand of money ; and afterward by doubling the enlisted strength of each company without the further addition of a single officer we should have the respectable force of 96,000 men, a force large enough for any probable necessity during the remainder of this century.

The militia and volunteers of the States would soon follow suit, and we should have throughout the country these small handy battalions of four companies, instead of the large cumbersome regiments of ten companies—a bad tactical unit, and in practice always scattered.

In 1884, General Sheridan, who had come to the command, said :

Were I called upon to recommend any change whatever, it would be simply to make a uniform organization for the three arms of the service by adding two companies and the corresponding majors to each regiment of infantry.

In this the Secretary of War concurred. And in the report of the Lieutenant-General of 1885 he says he would "increase the number of men in the companies, add two more companies and two majors to each regiment of infantry."

In this recommendation Secretary Endicott concurred, saying he hoped it might be doué, and "the three arms of the service made uniform."

Your committee do not feel that any language of their own could emphasize this long line of suggestion, amounting almost to a supplication, on the part of some of the ablest and most practical military men of modern times. Emanating as these words do from those who have emerged successful from one of the most stupendous conflicts recorded in history, their advice, if not admonitory, is entitled to the most serious attention.

Your committee, while not considering cumulative testimony necessary, beg leave to add the following testimony from that distinguished military chieftain, who has but recently expired, Major-General Hancock; under date of January 25, 1886, he says:

The subject is one of which I have long thought favorably, and should the bill become a law I believe it would add quite materially to the efficiency of the service.

Major-General Schofield, under date of February 2, 1886, says of this bill:

I indorse it most cordially. I have not heretofore urged the proposed change in infantry organization because the wisdom of it has seemed to me *self-evident*, and has been sufficiently dwelt upon by others; and because the necessity of some increase in the present effective strength of the Army has seemed to me more urgent than anything else.

Your committee assume that the desire for the proposed change has become apparent, and the necessity therefor demonstrated as fully as it can be in an ordinary report.

It remains to consider briefly the effect, so far as an increase of the Army, promotions therein, and cost thereof, are concerned.

The increase proposed by this bill, according to a recent statement made by Lieutenant-General Sheridan, would be twenty-five hundred enlisted men and two hundred second lieutenants.

A consideration worthy of remark on the point of promotion concerns the disposition to be made of the West Point class of '78, about to graduate. There will be thirty-nine vacancies for them to fill, and the other thirty-nine will probably be added to the Army as second lieutenants.

In other respects the promotions under this bill would be fifty captains, of twenty years' service, to be majors; of the one hundred first lieutenants who would be promoted to captains, seventy-two have seen over twenty years' service, twenty-three have had fifteen years and upwards of service, and five ten years and over; of the one hundred and fifty second lieutenants who would be promoted to first lieutenants, two have over twenty years, eight over fifteen years, forty-six ten years and over, eighty-seven over five years, and seven less than five years of service.

The increase of pay which these promotions would involve amounts to \$104,120 per annum, and the aggregate pay of the two hundred additional second lieutenants contemplated by this bill would amount to \$280,000, a total of \$384,120, while the annual cost of fifty additional companies of fifty men each would be \$679,176, making a grand total of \$1,063,296.

If the fifty companies of enlisted men were kept at forty men each, the cost would be reduced to \$932,246. But from this latter sum, the pay of thirty-nine second lieutenants who would fill vacancies, and of thirty-nine who would be added to the Army from the West Point class, should be deducted, \$109,200, which would reduce the increased cost to \$823,046. And if deemed advisable only one hundred of the two hundred second lieutenants need be commissioned, which would leave the

two additional companies without that subaltern officer, in which event a further saving of \$140,600 would occur, reducing the increased cost to \$783,046. This expenditure would not only give the country an efficient "system" or organization of the infantry branch of the service, but it would cause the entire Army to become efficient, and the country would then realize something from an annual expenditure of over \$15,000,000, and it could feel that the excess of cost had been authorized simply that both life and money would be saved, and full value received by the inauguration of a line of policy and the adoption of a "system" which had for its basis true economy rather than parsimony.

If an army is necessary at all, it should, like every other necessary thing, be made efficient. There is no true economy in a policy of ill-judged parsimony. The epoch of peace, with which this country is at present happily blessed, cannot last forever. Until human nature shall rise above its present weaknesses, the selfish aggressions of one people will occasionally clash with those of some other, and war is the result where diplomacy fails. Regard being had for the great increase of population, especially in our largest cities, containing disturbing elements; considering the rapid development of our valuable domestic interests, needing, no one can say when nor how much protection, at uncertain junctures; with the unsettled Mormon problem on our hands; with 25,000 savage Sioux within the borders of settlement and civilization, and thousands of other savages scattered over the sparsely settled portions of the public domain; with the interoceanic canal contention open; with the territorial aggrandizement of Cuba, and perhaps of other islands near us, involving a violation perchance of our foreign policy; with millions of money invested by our citizens in Mexico, your committee feel impelled to regard this bill as eminently deserving of favorable action by Congress.

Recognizing the fact that there are many deserving enlisted men in the Army worthy of promotion, your committee have deemed it proper, in several aspects, to recognize this fact, and have accordingly amended the bill by adding, at the end thereof the following:

*“Provided further,* That of the number of second lieutenants, in excess of the graduates of the Military Academy, appointed to the infantry arm of the service, one-half of such number shall be appointed from the enlisted men of the Army of the United States, after proper examination.”

And with this amendment, your committee respectfully report the bill favorably and ask its passage.