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EXTEND PROVISIONS OF PENSION LAWS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 320.]

FEBRUARY 25, 1834.

Mr. CHILTON, from the select committee to which the subject had been referred, made the following

REPORT:

*The Select Committee raised with instructions to inquire into the expediency of so extending the provisions of the act of congress passed 7th June, 1832, as to embrace such persons as were engaged in the wars against the Indians, down to the treaty of Greenville, in the year 1795, have, according to order, had that subject under consideration, and beg leave most respectfully to report :*

That they consider the propriety and policy of the original adoption of a pensioning system as having been too long and too well established to need the aid of any arguments or illustrations from this committee. If those questions were even not yet fully established, they are in nowise imbued in the inquiry submitted to them. Such a system has been adopted in this country, and is almost coeval with the calamities and misfortunes incident to its wars. Considering then the policy as being settled, that those who fought our battles during the revolutionary struggle should receive some aid from the Government in their declining years, and some public testimonial of the gratitude of their countrymen and their children, who have taken their places on the busy theatre of life, and are enjoying in rich luxuriance the benefits and blessings of that liberty, and of those free and excellent institutions which have descended to them as the fruits of the toil and valor of their illustrious ancestors, they deem it only necessary to submit to the House a very few brief suggestions touching the character and value of the services rendered by those whose claims are embraced in the resolution of inquiry under which they act. That the services of those valiant men were, and are, in the highest degree, meritorious, they consider it would be wholly superfluous to attempt to demonstrate. They were so received and so acknowledged by all who discussed the subject before the House, pending the consideration of the resolution; and your committee take much pleasure in adding their humble testimony and concurrence to the general tribute of respect and admiration which has from all quarters been awarded them. It has been generally conceded that, if their services were of the same character, and rendered under the same authority, and for the accomplishment of the same object, with those of the

different classes of revolutionary soldiers who are already provided with pensions under the different laws now in force, that then they ought also to be placed on the same footing with those, and a similar provision made for their benefit and accommodation. Whether this concession, however, be made or not, your committee are of opinion that the justice of such a conclusion follows of necessity, from the facts themselves. They will, therefore, content themselves to advert, in a few words, to the testimony within their reach, showing, as they think, conclusively, that notwithstanding the conclusion of a treaty of peace with Great Britain, long anterior to that time, yet the wars against the Indians, down to the ever memorable battle fought by General Wayne and his army, and the treaty with the Indian tribes, which followed it, and was executed at Greenville, constituted, in fact and truth, neither more nor less than a continuation of the revolutionary war—a struggle, which was not only bloody and arduous, but indispensable to its being brought to a final and satisfactory close.

Your committee might ask, by whom were the Indians first excited to acts of hostility and outrage against the Americans? And by whom were they supplied with the implements and munitions of war, with which our citizens were so long annoyed? The answer is plain and easy: It was by the British Government, and in their parliamentary history, and on the records of those days of strife between that nation and her colonies, is yet to be found evidence of the fact, that every effort was used, and every argument employed, to excite the savages to scenes of indiscriminate bloodshed and butchery on our feeble and unprotected frontier. It was insisted that it mattered not whether the colonists perished by the rope, and at the gallows, when they should be arrested and suspended as “traitors to their king,” or by the tomahawk of the savage. For the honor of humanity, your committee are inclined to hope that those by whom such language was used, even in the British Parliament, were unconscious that they were investigating the savages, not alone to the cruel butchery of our citizens who should be found arrayed against them in the tented field, or on the embattled plain, but also to the inhuman and bloody massacre of unprotected and unoffending women, and innocent and helpless children, even down to those who were hanging at their mothers’ breasts for subsistence; for such are truly the usages of savage warfare.

One bright example of christian benevolence, patriotism, and manly virtue, appeared at that time, who spurned such a proposition as that of bribing the savages to become our executioners, and retorted on its mover in strains of thrilling eloquence. This example was the memorable and immortal Chatham, the elder Pitt, whose life closed with this masterly effort in the cause of humanity. This circumstance is however introduced, not for the purpose of pronouncing a eulogy on his name and character, but solely for the purpose of establishing the fact that the Indians acted in subordination to, and by the procurement of, the British nation: and hence that the war with them was, in substance, part and parcel of the war with Great Britain. Indeed, it is a well established fact, that the arms and munitions of war with which they perpetrated their bloodiest designs on that part of our population which was most exposed, and with which they so long maintained their hostilities, were furnished them by the British Government, and that without such aid they could not have prosecuted those designs upon us with any material effect.

But it further appears to your committee that many of the British gar-

risons, notwithstanding the treaty of peace in 1783, were not surrendered up to this Government until the close of the Indian war. These were possessed and used by the Indians and their instigators, and they multiplied their facilities for carrying on their destructive aggressions. If your committee were to go into a detailed account of the prosecution of the war with the Indians during the period embraced in the resolution, it would not only swell this report to an inconvenient length, but would present scenes at which the human heart would shudder. They will, therefore, present two facts for the consideration of the House. The first is, that General Washington, who was then President of the United States, at different times, by his communications to Congress, and his orders sending forth regular troops, and his requisitions on the militia of Virginia, Kentucky, and western Pennsylvania, to every reasonable intent and purpose, recognised these wars as the closing scenes of the revolutionary war, as the American arms were never quietly laid down until the treaty of 1795, before referred to.

The second consideration relates to the value of the services of those men to the American Government, aside from the fact that they acted the last, and one among the bloodiest scenes of the great tragedy through which our ancestors waded to our present exalted state of civil, political, and religious freedom.

The vast and almost immeasurable extent of the public domain was situated in the direction and beyond the scenes of this savage warfare. Those early adventurers, who emigrated to it, and defended it at the peril, and many, very many of them, at the expense of their lives and the lives of their families, rendered to the United States a signal service, even in a pecuniary point of view, inasmuch as the public domain could neither be sold nor settled until the controversies with the Indians were adjusted, which could be done in no other way, excited as they were, than by the fate of war. Our settlers, which had adventured westward, were continually exposed to their pillage and their infuriated revenge; and hence they could pursue none of the avocations of life either in peace or security.

Spirits less chivalric than theirs would have quailed before the bloody storm; but they determined to withstand it; and to the credit of the memories of those who fell, as well as of those who survived it, be it said that they did successfully withstand it, and their valor and their sufferings resulted in the establishment of peace and order in that region; bringing into market that vast extent of country, and in planting the standard of religion, of science, and of civilization, in the fertile valley of the Mississippi, which nature seems to have designed for the ultimate Eden of this continent. Where the foot of civilized man had never trodden before, now are seen the stately edifices of art, and now are heard the pious voices of worshipping assemblies, where, before, the deep stillness of the forest had only been broken by the terrible war-whoop, or the piercing yell of the savage, as he meditated revenge, or triumphed in some scene of bloody victory.

The laws granting pensions at this time embrace every class of soldiers, whether regulars, militia, or volunteers, and whether engaged on the continental establishment, or as belonging to the lines of the several States, who served by continuous service, or in fractions of terms, for a period of six months. And whether their services were rendered against the British, the Indians, or the tories, in regiments, spy companies, or scouting parties, all within the foregoing classes, who served anterior to the conclusion of the *British war*, are pensioners. Yet those who fought afterwards,

however arduous their duties, great their sufferings, irreparable their losses and sacrifices, or however long their terms of service, are excluded. Your committee can perceive no good reason why this distinction should exist. A Government, to be perpetual, must be just; and to be just, it must deal with all its citizens upon the same principles of bounty and protection, when similarly situated.

Your committee being therefore of opinion that all those who were engaged in the wars against the Indians should be placed on the same footing with their compatriots in arms, who are already provided for, herewith beg leave to report a bill for their benefit, adopting, as in former acts, the term of six months as being the shortest period, continuous, or made up of fractions of terms, which shall entitle to a pension.

The bill for the relief of the veterans of the American Revolution, passed by the House of Representatives on the 20th of July, 1832, and approved by the President on the 23d of the same month, and the bill for the relief of the veterans of the War of 1812, passed by the House of Representatives on the 10th of July, 1832, and approved by the President on the 13th of the same month, have been the subject of much discussion in the House of Representatives, and it is believed that they will be passed in the course of the present session. The bill for the relief of the veterans of the War of 1812, which was introduced by the Honorable William C. C. Bryant, of New York, and reported favorably by the Committee on Pensions, on the 10th of July, 1832, and passed by the House of Representatives on the 10th of the same month, and approved by the President on the 13th of the same month, has been the subject of much discussion in the House of Representatives, and it is believed that it will be passed in the course of the present session. The bill for the relief of the veterans of the War of 1812, which was introduced by the Honorable William C. C. Bryant, of New York, and reported favorably by the Committee on Pensions, on the 10th of July, 1832, and passed by the House of Representatives on the 10th of the same month, and approved by the President on the 13th of the same month, has been the subject of much discussion in the House of Representatives, and it is believed that it will be passed in the course of the present session.