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Isaac Van Camp.

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H.R. Rep. No. 980, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1842)

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ISAAC VAN CAMP.

JULY 29, 1842.

Laid on the table.

Mr. HALL, from the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, made the following

REPORT :

*The Committee on Revolutionary Claims, to which was referred the petition of Isaac Van Camp, submit the following report :*

The petitioner represents that, during the revolutionary war, he was a boatman, employed by the Government in the navigation of boats on the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, which supplied the troops of the United States with provisions and munitions of war; that when he entered said service he took into the same all the property he then possessed, amounting to about \$800, which was lost to the petitioner and gained by the hostile foe; for which property so lost he prays compensation of the Government.

The petitioner does not specify any of the articles of property lost, or mention the character of the articles. He produces no proof of any loss of property, but refers to evidence on file in the Pension office among his pension papers. The committee have obtained a copy of those papers, and, on examination of the same, the only testimony they find stating any loss of property by the petitioner, is an affidavit of Cornelius Van Camp and Henry Apple: they state that when the petitioner entered the service in 1779 or 1780, "he deposited his household furniture at Fort *Walvende*, for safe keeping, and that during his absence the said fort, situated on the south side of the Mohawk, was taken by the Indians and Tories, and wholly consumed by fire, by which the petitioner lost all his property; but the quantity, quality, and value of said property so lost the witnesses do not know." This is all the evidence. It appears altogether uncertain whether the petitioner's loss was four or five hundred dollars, or any other sum.

But were the amount of the petitioner's claim well ascertained, it would not furnish the ground for a valid claim against the Government. The petitioner's loss, whatever it may have been, was one of the misfortunes of war, against which Governments have never undertaken to provide. The Treasury of this Government would be insufficient to satisfy the claims of a like character which the revolutionary period could furnish; and were they now recognized, the lapse of time and the consequent loss of the true history of particular sufferings, would absolutely forbid any thing like a fair and correct adjustment of such claims.

Were the ability of the Government sufficient for such an indemnification, the impolicy of such a rule would be sufficient to prevent its adoption, especially in regard to moveable property. A rule that should hold out to the owner a prospect of indemnity for its loss, would operate as a premium to imbecility and unfaithfulness in its defence, and thereby prove a discouragement to patriotism and valor. No Government would understandingly offer such a premium. The committee therefore recommend that the claim be rejected.