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CONGRESS.

House of Representatives, January 14.

The house went into committee of the whole on the following resolution, viz.

Resolved, That it is expedient to amend the act for laying duties on stamping vellum, parchment and paper, as so abolish the offices thereby established for the stamping of vellum, parchment and paper, in the several districts of the United States and to establish at the seat of government, one general office for that purpose.

Which was agreed to, and ordered to be reported without amendment.

Upon the question in the house to agree to the report of the committee, Messrs. Nicholas and Hartley spoke against it—and Mr. Harper in favor of it—when the question was put and carried—Ayes 47—Noes 32.

The committee of ways and means were directed to bring in a bill pursuant to said resolution.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.

A written message from the President of the United States, by the secretary, Mr. Shaw, was presented to the house, and read, in the words following, to wit:

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives,

As the inclosed letter, from a member of your house, received by me in the night of Saturday, the 11th instant, relates to the privileges of the house, which in my opinion, ought to be inquired into in the house itself, if any where, I have thought proper to submit the whole letter and its tendencies, to your consideration, without any other comments on its matter or style.

But as the gross impropriety of conduct on the part of persons holding commissions in the army or navy of the United States, ought to pass without due animadversion, I have directed the secretary of war and secretary of the navy, to investigate the conduct complained of, and to report to me, without delay, such a statement of facts as will enable me to decide on the course which duty and justice shall appear to prescribe.

JOHN ADAMS.

United States, January 14, 1800.

The following is the letter alluded to.

SIR,

KNOWN to you only as holding, in common with yourself, the honorable station of servant to the same sovereign people, and disclaiming all pretensions to make to you any application which, in the general estimation of men, requires the preface of apology, I shall, without the circumlocution of compliment, proceed to state the cause which induces this address.

For words of a general nature, uttered on the floor of this house, and addressed, in my official capacity, to the chairman of the committee of the whole, and urged with a view to effect the reduction of a military establishment, I have been grossly and publicly insulted, by two officers of the army (or navy, I know not which) with evident intention to provoke me to a conduct which, in some sort, might justify the hostile designs which they manifestly entertained towards me, and from the execution of which, I believe, they were only deterred by the presence of several of my friends (members of this house) who felt themselves implicated in an insult, which although more particularly offered to one, was certainly levelled to all.

I am acquainted with the name of one only of these unfortunate young men, who appear to have made for false an estimate of true dignity of character; who seem to have mistaken brutality for spirit, and an armed combination against the person of an individual for an indication of courage. He was called, I think, McKnight;—rank unknown; and, to my best recollection, of the Navy.—Mr. Christie, a member of this House, appeared to know him; and that gentleman, with capt. Campbell Smith who, as I understood, endeavored to deter those rash youths from their scheme, and whose conduct would evince, if indeed there were any need of proof, that the character of the man and the citizen is not incompatible with the profession of a soldier, can give an account of the various instances of misconduct which were exhibited by the parties. Mr. Van Rensselaer, the Lieut. Governor of New York, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Glen, and Mr. Macon of the House of Representatives, were likewise present at those transactions.

Having stated the fact, it would be derogatory to your character, Sir, for me to point out the remedy, which it is your province to provide, nor shall I defend from the respect which I owe myself to declare what are not the considerations which govern my conduct on this occasion. So far as they relate to this application addressed to you in a public capacity, they can only be supplied by you to be of a public nature, and it is enough for me to state that the independence of the

Legislature has been attacked, the majesty of the people, of which you are the principal representative, insulted and your authority contemned. In their name I demand that a provision commensurate with the evil be made, and which will be calculated to deter others from any future attempt to introduce the reign of Terror into our country. In addressing you in the plain language of man, I give you, Sir, the best proof that I can afford of the estimation in which I hold your office and your understanding; and I assure you with truth, that I am, with respect,

Your fellow-citizen,
JOHN RANDOLPH, Jun.

Chamber of the representatives of the United States, 11th January, 24th of independence.

The President of the United States.

Mr. Kittera moved that the message and letter accompanying it, be referred to a select committee.

Mr. Randolph hoped it would not. It was far from his expectation, he said, when he addressed the letter now before the house, to the President, that it would have been made the subject of a communication. Had he thought the house could have remedied the abuse complained of, he would have entered his complaint here, but he did not conceive it within their jurisdiction; and he was opposed to it as being a bad precedent, which might at some future period, be prostituted to purposes injurious to the country. The power of the commander in chief of the army, in his opinion, was sufficient to afford a remedy, and to restrain men under his command, from giving personal abuse and insult. And he therefore disclaimed any wish that the house should take measures for his protection.

The voice of the house appeared to be unanimous for the commitment, and several members expressed an opinion, that the President, in submitting the subject to the house, had acted judiciously, it being a question on which he could not, dare not decide. It was a constitutional prerogative vested in that house alone, and that house, after having a statement of facts, were to be the sole judges of them. The wish of the complainant to impeach equally, ought not to have any weight, for if a member was to be insulted for any language made use of in debate, there was an end to all legislation, and they might as well return to their homes at once.

The question for commitment was put and carried, and Mr. C. Goodrich, Mr. Macon, Mr. Kittera, Mr. Sewall, Mr. R. Williams, and Mr. Bayard were appointed.

Wednesday, January 15.

Mr. Otis called up for consideration, the report of the committee of defence; but Mr. Macon observing that he wished further time to consider the subject, and expressing a wish that the unfinished business of yesterday might be proceeded on—Mr. O. withdrew his motion.

Mr. Smith renewed the motion for taking into consideration the following report of the committee of defence:

The committee to whom was referred so much of the speech of the President of the United States, as relates to a system of national defence, commensurate with our resources, and the situation of our country, Report, in part—

That in the opinion of the committee no such material change in the state of the foreign relations of the United States has happened as would justify a relinquishment of any of the means of defence heretofore adopted by congress, but that the national honor and interest in the present posture of affairs, make it prudent and necessary to continue prepared for the worst event; but while danger still threatens our country, yet circumstances having diminished the probability of an immediate invasion, the attention of the committee has been particularly directed to the state of the military establishment with a view to reconcile safety with economy, to preserve the establishment and retrench the expense. The annexed abstract and letter from the Secretary at War, exhibit the state of the twelve new regiments of infantry according to the latest returns. As these men have received their bounty and clothing and are daily improving in discipline; as they would be useful in any sudden emergency, and the greater part of them may also be usefully employed until wanted for actual service, on the fortifications of ports and harbours, it is conceived proper to retain them, but to suspend the recruiting service until the approach of danger shall compel the government to resume it. This project combines the advantage of an important reduction of the national expense, with that of having at command a body of officers ready for service upon short notice, and a number of disciplined troops sufficient for the present occasion.

The committee therefore submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That from and after the day of next, all enlistments under an act, entitled, "an act to augment the army of the U. States and for other purposes," shall be suspended until the next session of Congress, unless war should break out between the United States and a foreign European power, or in case imminent danger of invasion of their territory by any such power shall, in the opinion of the President of the United States be discovered to exist.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

2d of January 1800.

Sir,

I received your letter dated yesterday, and have the honour to inform the committee of defence, that I am preparing and have nearly finished, a report to the President of the United States, on the subject of the military establishment, containing propositions which it is conceived would improve it, and detailing information from the latest documents, as far as they go, that have been transmitted to me, relative to the number of men that have been actually enlisted, in the new regiments.

It will be conceived the report mentioned, is intended to embrace the most material objects that have occurred to me, as promising amelioration to our military system. The President, I respectfully presume, will communicate the same in Congress.

The number of men enlisted, and the dates therein specified, as appears from the latest returns to the War Department, in the twelve new regiments of infantry, will be seen by the enclosed statement, which is respectfully submitted.

The other requisitions will require some time to prepare an accurate reply to. They shall claim my attention, and an answer be furnished as soon as possible.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

JAMES M'HENRY.

H. G. Otis, Esq. chairman of the committee of defence, of the house of representatives of the United States.

Return of the non commissioned officers, musicians and privates, enlisted for the twelve regiments, directed to be raised in pursuance of the act of July 16, 1798.	no return
5th regt. to 12th April,	
6th regt. to Dec. 1799,	134
7th regt. to Nov.	258
8th regt. to Oct.	424
9th regt. to Sept.	314
10th regt. to Aug.	448
11th regt. to Oct.	458
12th regt. to Sept.	287
13th regt. to Nov.	327
14th regt. to Nov.	327
15th regt. to Nov.	145
16th regt. to Nov.	233
	Total 3,355

War Department, Jan. 2, 1800.

AN ESTIMATE,

For an appropriation of Monies, for the services of the year 1800.

The Secretary of the Treasury respectfully reports to the House of Representatives of the United States:

That for the services of the year one thousand eight hundred, the following appropriations, as detailed in the estimates herewith transmitted, appear to be necessary.

	Dols.	Cts.
For the civil list, or the support of the government, including the contingent expenses of the several departments and officers, the sum of	562,275	95
For the payment of annuities and grants,	953	33
For the support of the mint establishments,	13,300	0
For the expenses of intercourse with foreign nations, including a sum required for reimbursing to Consuls of the United States, the expense of supporting claims to captured property; for aid to distressed seamen in foreign countries, and occasional assistance after their arrival in the United States, exclusive of the annual appropriation authorized by the act of March 19th, 1798,	92,000	0
For the payment of expenses incident to the treaties with Great Britain, Spain, and the Mediterranean powers,	244,000	0
For defraying the expenses incident to the valuation of dwelling houses and lands, and the enumeration of slaves, pursuant to the act of July 9th, 1798,	215,000	0