

JACOB HOUSEMAN.

FEBRUARY 14, 1837.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. E. WHITTLESEY, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee of Claims, to which was referred the petition of Jacob Houseman, report :

That the petitioner presents the following account :

“INDIAN KEY, August 24, 1836.

The United States to Jacob Houseman,	Dr.
To total amount of expenses for the defence of Indian Key, from the 9th day of January to the 9th day of June, 1836, as per bill and receipts herewith annexed	\$3,918 90
From the 9th day of June to the 24th day of August, 1836, as per bill and receipts herewith	1,300 92
	<u>\$5,219 82</u>

Captain's pay being omitted on the accounts, and amount of rations for ditto.

Lieutenants' pay being omitted on the accounts, and amount of rations for ditto."

It is stated that the petitioner lived at Indian Key, in Florida, and, on the commencement of the late Indian hostilities, he raised a company on said Key, for the defence of himself and those that resided there.

Thomas Eastin, who signs as major commanding, on the 13th of January, 1836, addressed a letter to Jacob Houseman, Esq., authorizing him to hold an election among the people, either for captain or lieutenant, "whose duty it should be to take command of such forces as can be collected, in defence of your island." He was then directed to take an account of the expenses that compensation might be asked from the Government, and to advise the said Eastin of his proceedings.

On the 27th of January, Major Eastin, reciting his power, by the laws of Florida, to repel invasion and to suppress insurrection, ordered "that the commanding officer of company B, 10th regiment of Florida militia, do enrol, and order into the service, all the able-bodied men within his command, over the age of 18 and under the age of 45 years, to be subject to the

rules and articles of war. Such sailors as are considered to be within the waters of the United States come within the limits of the above order."

It does not appear to whom this order was addressed, but the inference is, it was sent to the petitioner.

On the 30th of January, 1836, Major Eastin wrote to Capt. Jacob Houseman, and advised him that he had been informed by a letter from Dr. Crews that the Indians had a quantity of arms and munitions of war, and would probably be joined by disaffected negroes, and endeavor to make their escape through the Keys to the West India islands; and that it would be best for Captain Houseman to employ a look-out boat.

Bills and receipts are presented for the ammunition procured.

The wages of those said to be under Captain Houseman's command are put down at thirty cents per day, and the rations at fifty cents per day.

Lists of the names of the men said to compose the company are before the committee, but they are without any certificate to authenticate them.

There is a paper which purports to be the proceedings of a meeting of the inhabitants of Indian Key, or articles of enlistment for four months, for the defence of the place, with a voluntary obligation that those who subscribed the articles should be subject to the rules and articles of war, and obedient to the officers that might be put over them.

That paper is not authenticated.

There are papers which purport to be receipts, in which the men acknowledge they have been paid by Captain Houseman.

These receipts are not authenticated.

No officer certifies the men were ever mustered, or that they performed a day's service.

The committee sent the papers to the Secretary of War for information.

They desired to know whether the company had been mustered into the service, and whether muster-rolls had been returned to the War Office; and why, if the service had been performed, the company might not be paid under existing laws.

The Secretary furnished the committee with the reports of the Adjutant General and of the Paymaster General. It will be seen by them, that no muster-rolls have been returned of said company, and that, if the service has been performed, there is no law for paying this description of troops.

The committee think it is necessary, before payment be recommended, that there be proof that the company performed actual service for a definite period. This proof should be made through the Governor of the Territory, or by the commanding officer in the United States service in that quarter, if he has personal knowledge on the subject. It should also appear that the exigency required the company for the necessary defence of the Key. If the company organized, and held itself in readiness to perform duty, or if it did occasionally perform duty, those facts should be made to appear.

At present, the following resolution is submitted:

Resolved, That the prayer of the petition be not granted.