

COMPENSATION TO OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE
INDIAN WARS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 2.]

APRIL 6, 1846.

Mr. ATKINSON, from the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, to whom was referred "the bill (H. R. 2) providing a similar compensation for officers and soldiers who served in the Indian wars prior to the treaty of Greenville in 1795, as is now authorized by law to be paid to officers and soldiers of the revolutionary war," have had the same under consideration, and report :

That the bill seeks to accomplish two important objects: 1st, to pension persons who served for three months and upwards in the Indian wars prior to 1795; and, 2dly, to lessen the term of service now required by law, to entitle those who served in the revolutionary war to a pension. Your committee believe that neither object is consistent with sound principles of public policy. They deem it unnecessary to enter at length into the objections of both or either of them, because the journals of Congress contain clear and lucid reports upon both subjects, the arguments in which your committee deem it unnecessary here to repeat. The second object sought to be obtained by this bill has frequently been possessed by Congress, and uniformly defeated; and your committee believe that the reasons for its rejection were sound and sufficient, and still exist in undiminished force.

Upon the general policy of pensions for past services your committee would express no opinion; but they concur in the opinion that any further extension of the pension laws now of force would be unwise, impolitic, and unjust. The main object of the bill seems to be to extend the present pension laws, so as to include those who served in the army for three months against the Indians prior to 1795. Your committee cannot perceive why that class of persons should be better entitled to pensions than those who have served against the Indians since the year 1795, or more especially how they are better entitled than those who served against the British in the last war. It is believed by your committee that this object can only be sustained upon the principle that every man who serves in the war of his country for three months ought to be pensioned for the balance of his life. If Congress thinks proper to sanction such a principle, one moiety of the nation are likely to become pensioners, and the other paupers. This principle is neither founded in justice, right, nor public necessity; and your committee recommend that the bill be rejected.