

DOCUMENT

IN RELATION

To the subjugation of the hostile Indians in Florida.

FEBRUARY 6, 1839.

Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

DOVER, STATE OF DELAWARE,
February 2, 1839:

SIR: The anxiety I feel for the welfare of my country in all her difficulties, I hope will be a sufficient excuse for thus addressing you upon the important subject of the final subjugation of the Indians in Florida. I have had much experience in Indian warfare on our northwestern frontier, and understand their character well. I served nine years as an officer in the United States army during the late war and subsequently. I served a campaign in Florida as captain of volunteers from Philadelphia, under the command of Captain Thistle, and have had some opportunities of forming a judgment of the particular character of the enemy in that quarter, the operations of the army last year, and the probable result of future operations. In consequence of which, I have been not a little curious to see what measures the Government may resort to, in order to relieve itself from the ruinous expenditure and sacrifice of life to which it has long been subjected; and how accomplish the still greater difficulty of giving permanent peace and security to that important frontier.

The entire and absolute expulsion of the Indians from Florida is recommended by the report of the Secretary of War, and appears to me the sure and only means of permanent tranquillity in that quarter, but the proposition is rather abstract, since he has not pointed out, with even tolerable precision, any mode by which it can be accomplished.

This defect is sought to be remedied by the provisions in the bill recently reported to the Senate by the Military Committee; but so far from its making provision for *expelling* the Indians, it provides for their permanent occupancy of Florida, and furnishes them with subjects for additional *murders* and *depredation* out of such miserable settlers as ignorance or stern necessity may lead into that inhospitable region. And so far from its producing prompt and perpetual peace, its direct tendency is to create perpetual war, and at length either destroy or banish the settlers, while it gives strength and confidence to the enemy, which will compel the Government, even at last, to either drive the enemy from the country or exterminate them.

Since having seen the reports referred to, I have seen by accident a document printed by the Senate, emanating from my old hunter friend, Captain Thistle, who, with his accustomed skill in such matters, has, with a

clearness not to be misunderstood or mistified, pointed out the whole evil and the sole remedy, and I am so well satisfied of the efficiency of his plan, and the efficiency of himself, that I will with alacrity volunteer under his command, if his plans should be adopted, and bring with me to the field not less than five or six hundred men, as volunteers, of the best materials, and I hazard nothing in saying that suitable volunteers can be had, and will be promptly offered, even as far as may be desired, from Philadelphia and elsewhere, the moment this plan is promulgated. I have the honor to hold a commission as colonel of the 153d regiment, Pennsylvania militia, and also a captaincy of volunteers. I am fully acquainted with the chivalric spirit of the military of Pennsylvania and our country generally, and have spoken nothing at hazard. I am fully persuaded that no compromise with the Indians of Florida will answer the ultimate views of the Government; that they must be driven from the soil; and that Captain Thistle's plan is the only efficient one to be pursued.

I request that this communication may be printed, and referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
BRITTON EVANS, Col. 153d Reg. Pa. militia.
HON. RICHARD H. BAYARD, U. S. Senator.