

ELIZA VETHAKE.

AUGUST 1, 1850.

Laid upon the table.

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

REPORT:

*The Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, to whom was referred the petition of Eliza Seely, wife of Henry Vethake, of the city and county of Philadelphia, respectfully report:*

The petitioner claims to be the daughter of Isaac Seely, deceased, who was a major in the army of the Revolution. She also represents that the said Isaac and Elizabeth Hunt, the mother of the petitioner, were united in marriage before the 1st day of January, 1794; that the said Isaac has deceased; that the said Elizabeth lived until the beginning of July, 1837, when she deceased, and that the petitioner is the sole surviving child of the said Major Isaac Seely; and she asks for a special act of Congress, allowing her to enjoy the benefits to which her mother, the said Elizabeth, would have been entitled under the acts of July 7, 1838, and the 23d of August, 1842, had she survived till the last mentioned date.

The petitioner sustains her claims by her own oath, but offers no other evidence in their support; the committee, however, have taken the facts as confessed, and considered them as strictly proved. The date of the said Isaac's death is not given, and the death of the said Elizabeth is alleged to have happened "in the beginning of July, 1837." It is therefore understood that both the said Isaac and Elizabeth deceased before the passage of any act of Congress granting gratuities for revolutionary services to which they, or either of them, would have been entitled, had they been in life at the time such acts were passed. Of course, no rights under those acts vested in them, nor can any rights under said acts be transmitted by them to their children. The question now to be considered is, ought the benefits heretofore granted to the soldiers, and the widows of the soldiers, of the Revolution, to be extended to the children of such soldiers? The committee are of opinion they should not. To say nothing of the difficulty in distributing these sums among the scattered children of many of the soldiers, the immense burden it would throw upon the treasury, by making so large a number its annual recipients, should cause us to hesitate before we take so important a step. It has been the policy of our laws to pay such sums as were due parents at the time of their decease, to their children, under certain circumstances, upon the ground that a pension becomes a vested right in the donee; but there has been no instance in which a child has received a pension as such, on account of the services

of his father. Pensions are only given in consideration of services rendered, and are regarded personal so far as never to be extended beyond the widow of the person rendering the service. Several petitions involving the question now under consideration have been presented to, and considered by the committee, during the present session, and the committee have uniformly refused to recommend them to the favorable consideration of Congress. The present petitioner shows no reason for making her case an exception to this general and well settled rule. The committee therefore ask to be discharged from the further consideration of this subject, and recommend that the petition be laid upon the table.

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

REPORT

The Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, to whom was referred the petition of Elizabeth Seely, wife of Henry Seely, of the county of Philadelphia, respectfully report

The petitioner claims to be the daughter of Isaac Seely, who was a major in the army of the Revolution. She also claims that she and Elizabeth Seely, the mother of the petitioner, were united in marriage before the 1st day of January, 1783, and that Isaac Seely died before the 1st day of January, 1783, and the petitioner is the sole surviving child of the said Isaac Seely, and that the petitioner is the sole surviving child of the said Major Isaac Seely; and she asks for a pension of \$1000 per annum, allowing her to enjoy the benefits to which her mother, Elizabeth Seely, would have been entitled under the acts of July 7, 1832, and the 3d of August, 1815; and she swears to all the facts stated above.

The petitioner states her claims by her own oath, but offers no other evidence in their support; the committee, however, have taken the pains to collect, and ascertained them as strictly possible. The date of the petitioner's death is not given, and the death of the said Elizabeth is alleged to have occurred in the beginning of July, 1837. It is therefore manifest that both the said Isaac and Elizabeth Seely, deceased, were alive at the time such acts were passed. Of course, no rights under these acts vested in them, nor can any rights under said acts be transmitted to their children. The question now to be considered is, whether the pension heretofore granted to the soldiers, and the widows of the soldiers of the Revolution, to be extended to the children of such soldiers. The committee are of opinion they should not. In any nation of the world, it is distinguished these times among the scattered children of many of the soldiers, and immense numbers would throw upon the treasury, by making so large a number of annual recipients, should cause us to hesitate before we do so. It has been the policy of our laws to pay such sums as were due parents in the time of their decease, to their children under certain circumstances, upon the ground that a portion becomes a vested right in the heirs; but this has been an instance in which a child has received a pension as such, on account of the services