REPORT.

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN COMPLIANCE WITH

A resolution of the Senate of August 30, 1856, calling for information respecting the amount necessary to pay the allowances proposed to be made by the bill for the settlement of claims of officers of the Revolution, and the widows and orphans of those who died in service.

December 4, 1856.—Read, ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, December 2, 1856.

Sir: On the 30th day of August last the Senate passed a resolution in the following words, viz:

"Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be directed to report to the Senate, at the commencement of the next session of Congress, as accurately as practicable, the amount that will be required to pay the allowances proposed to be made by the bill passed by the House of Representatives at the last session, entitled 'An act to provide for the settlement of the claims of the officers of the revolutionary army, and of the widows and orphan children of those who died in the service.'"

Agreeably to the direction contained in said resolution, I now have the honor to transmit to the Senate herewith a report of the Commissioner of Pensions, dated the 15th of October last, and accompanying statement, made out as "accurately as practicable," containing the information desired.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. McCLELLAND, Secretary.

Hon. J. D. Bright,
President of the Senate.

PENSION OFFICE,

October 15, 1856.

Sir: I have to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of a resolution of the Senate of August 30, 1856, relative to a report "as accurately as practicable" of the amount which would be required to pay the allow-
ALLOWANCES PROPOSED TO BE MADE

ances proposed to be made by the bill passed by the House of Representatives at the last session, providing for the settlement of the claims of the officers of the revolutionary army, &c., by you referred to me for the report directed. In reply, I beg leave to submit the following:

The bill referred to provides, in substance, for the payment to each officer, or, in case of his death, to his widow, children, and grandchildren, of the half-pay for life, to which he was entitled under the several resolutions of Congress, mentioned in the bill, from the time he became entitled to the same up to the time of his death, if before March 3, 1826, and up to that date, if his death occurred thereafter; deducting therefrom the amount which may have been received by said officer as commutation under the resolution of March 22, 1783 and excepting such as have since received half-pay under private acts. (See sections 1, 2, 3, 9, and 11.) It also provides for extending to surgeons' mates the benefit of the resolution of January 17, 1781, thus giving to them half-pay for life, the same as it was given to the parties named therein by that resolution. (See section 5.) Also, for the payment to the widows and children of all officers, whether of the continental line or of volunteer corps, who died in service at any time during the revolutionary war, of the half-pay for seven years granted to widows and children of officers in the continental line only by the resolution of August 24, 1780. (See section 4.)

With regard to all these different provisions, I would remark, generally, that there are not in the possession of this or any other office here, so far as I can ascertain, sufficient data for a certain and accurate calculation of the amounts which would be required by them. Any calculations must, therefore, in a great degree, be hypothetical.

As to the provision first mentioned, the data necessary for an accurate calculation are, the number of officers by whom, or whose representatives, within the degrees specified, claims would be made under the bill; the amount of the half-pay to each per year; and the number of years for which it would extend. The amount of yearly half-pay for each rank of officers is fixed and known. The principal difficulties in the calculation, therefore, are with regard to the number of claims, and the time for which they should be computed.

From the most accurate information which can be obtained from any records in this office, the number of officers who received commutation under the resolutions mentioned in the bill, exclusive of those who have since received half-pay for life under private acts, is 2,163. This is less than the number of officers assumed in the report of the committee of the House accompanying the bill; but it is taken for the purpose of the present calculations, because of at least this number there is no doubt. The amount of yearly half-pay to all these officers, according to the original resolutions granting the same, would be $508,625.

In the report of the committee, it is estimated that claims would not be established under the bill on account of more than one-half of the whole number of officers, an allowance of one-half being made for officers who died within the ten years covered by the commutation already received, and for those who died without issue, or without any now within the degrees mentioned; and also for claims which on other
FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS, ETC.

accounts may not be presented or properly established. This allowance is conjectural, and there are no means of strictly testing its accuracy; though in the absence of data to show the same, there seem to be reasons for doubting it. The average age of the officers at the close of the war was about thirty years. This comparatively short age renders more probable their own survivorship beyond the ten years covered by the commutation received under the resolution of March, 1783, and also the present survivorship of issue within the degrees specified. The act of May 15, 1828, granted pensions to those officers who were entitled to half-pay for life under the resolution of October 21, 1780, mentioned in this bill. From an examination of the rolls in this office of the pensions allowed under that act, it appears that four hundred were to such officers who, consequently, were living at the time of the passage of the act. This shows nearly one-fifth of the whole number of officers above stated surviving after the lapse of forty-five years from the close of the war. There will be comparatively little difficulty in the establishment of claims by the parties properly entitled under the bill. The records of the treasury show all the parties who received commutation under the resolution of March, 1783, and whose claims, therefore, are embraced by this bill. The points of proof necessary to establish claims by the representatives under the bill will therefore be the death of the officer, and their relationship to him, which, in ordinary cases, it is presumed can readily be proven. In this respect, claims under this bill will be different from ordinary claims for revolutionary pensions, in which the most difficult point generally is the proof of service. It is true that some of the officers died without any issue; but for the reasons above suggested, I am inclined to regard the allowance of one-half, assumed by the committee, as too large, and to consider an allowance of one-third as probably more nearly correct. Such an allowance would leave 1,442 out of the 2,163 cases, to be provided for at the yearly rate of $339,084, being two-thirds of the $508,625 above stated.

In the same report of the committee, the average life of each officer, after the time from which his half-pay was to commence, is assumed to be twenty years. In a report on this subject, made by the Committee on Military Pensions, May 8, 1826, the average age of the officers at the time their half-pay was to commence under the original resolutions, is assumed to have been about thirty years, and the expectation of life at that age to be not over thirty-two years, and perhaps not twenty-eight. This last number—twenty-eight—is very nearly in accordance with the tables of mortality, showing the expectation of life at different ages adopted by life insurance companies in this country, and therefore probably more nearly correct than the number—twenty years—assumed in that report. I have been furnished with minutes from a very reliable source, showing the times of death of forty-one officers of the same State, on account of whose services claims will be made under this bill if it becomes a law. They constitute nearly one-half of all the officers of that State who received commutation under the original resolutions. A calculation from those minutes makes an average life, after the time their half-pay commenced, of very near twenty-five years. Assuming this period for the calculation, and
ALLOWANCES PROPOSED TO BE MADE

deducting ten years for the period covered by the commutation received under the resolution of March, 1783, leaves fifteen years of half-pay provided for by this bill. At the rate of $339,084 per year for 1,442 officers, as before mentioned, fifteen years would make a gross sum of $5,086,250.

Another form of calculation is this: The minutes before referred to of forty-one claims, which will be presented under this bill, if passed, show that the amount which would be required to satisfy those claims is $137,690. At the same rate, the amount which would be required to satisfy the whole number of claims—1,442—which it is assumed will be established under the bill, as before mentioned, is very near $4,842,668.60.

The minutes I have mentioned seem a proper basis for calculations, because they are not of isolated cases throughout the whole country, but of claims which will be presented on account of forty-one officers of different ranks out of one hundred and three, the whole number who were in the same state; and there appears nothing peculiar in the cases so that they may not be properly taken as a fair average of all the claims.

With regard to the second provision, relative to surgeons' mates, the best information which can be had from any records in this office shows that there were fifty-seven. Assuming that claims will be presented on account of two-thirds of that number, and the average life to be twenty-five years, as in the case of officers, the calculation will be for thirty-eight, at $240 per year, each, for twenty-five years, making an amount of $228,000. The calculation is for the whole period, because surgeons' mates did not receive commutation, not being considered within the provisions of the resolutions granting half-pay, and therefore no deduction is to be made on that account.

I am not aware of any means for a calculation with regard to the last provision, for seven years' half-pay to widows and children. The original resolution confined that half-pay to cases of those officers who were in the continental line. It is supposed that most of the claims embraced under that resolution have been settled, and very few, if any, would be made under this bill. The number of officers of the volunteer corps who died in the service can be ascertained only from an examination of the rolls in the several States. However, considering the long lapse of time since the termination of the revolutionary war, now over seventy-three years, it does not seem probable that a large number of widows or children of those who died in that service can now be surviving. It will be seen that the bill confines the benefits of its provisions to those two classes of relationship. I have no data for any calculation as to the probable amount which would be required by this provision.

The foregoing calculations differ in form and in results from those in the report of the committee. The grounds for the different calculations, however, appear, and will be for consideration in determining the probable correctness of each, and what reliance should be placed on either in forming a judgment as to the amount which would be required to pay the allowances proposed by the bill. I would, however, further suggest that the rolls of pensions under the act of May
15, 1828, as hereinbefore mentioned, show that there were surviving at that time four hundred officers who, if now living, would be embraced within the provisions of this bill relative to half-pay for life. Under the bill, therefore, their representatives within the degrees specified, (and from the long ages and comparatively recent deaths of the officers it is probable there are such,) would be entitled to half-pay up to March 3, 1826—that is, for forty-three years. Deducting ten years for the period covered by commutation received under the resolution of March, 1783, leaves thirty-three years to be provided for. The half-pay to which they were entitled, according to their respective ranks, amounts to $164,400 per annum. That amount per year for thirty-three years, makes the aggregate sum of $2,112,610. This is very near the whole amount calculated in the report of the committee to be required to pay all the claims, and still leaves to be provided for 1,042 claims remaining of the 1,442 herein calculated as probable to be presented.

In the foregoing calculation, from the number of officers who were allowed pensions under the act of May 15, 1828, it is assumed that such allowances were properly made, and therefore the parties to whom made were entitled to half-pay under the resolution referred to, and consequently are embraced within the provisions of this bill. It is supposed, however, that some of those allowances were improperly made to parties not entitled under the act. If so, they would not be embraced by this bill, and should not be included in the calculation. An allowance of one-sixth of the number will probably cover all such improper allowances, if any.

In forming a judgment as to the probable amount which would be required by the provisions of this bill, it should be considered that the actual payments of the commutation pay made to the officers under the resolution of March, 1783, which was the half-pay for ten years only, amounted to $5,086,250, as appears by the records in this office.

The amounts of the foregoing calculations make the sum of $5,314,250 for the two provisions first named.

There is not now on the rolls of pensions under the act of 1828 any pensioner who was an officer embraced within the provisions of the resolution granting half-pay. If any such were now living, he would be entitled to a pension under that act. It is most probable, therefore, that there is no one now surviving. The provisions of this bill would therefore inure to the benefit of the representatives specified.

In connexion with this subject, allow me to call attention to some provisions in the bill as passed by the House. The second and third sections seem to contemplate that the act, if passed, shall be executed at the Treasury, where all the records of the settlements of half-pay and commutation are; but the fourth section provides that the rules of evidence shall be prescribed by the War Department under the direction of the President.

The resolution is herewith returned.

I am, with much respect, your obedient servant,

J. MINOT, Commissioner.

Honorable Robert McClelland,
Secretary of the Interior.
Table of revolutionary officers entitled to half-pay, who have received their commutation, having served to the end of the war, and who would be embraced by the bill passed by the House of Representatives, (identical with the bill passed by the Senate at a previous session of Congress.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Major generals</th>
<th>Brigadier generals</th>
<th>Colonels</th>
<th>Lieutenants-colonels</th>
<th>Majors</th>
<th>Captains</th>
<th>Lieutenants</th>
<th>Ensigns</th>
<th>Surgeons' mates</th>
<th>Total No. of officers</th>
<th>Original commutation issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$180,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>239,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2,090</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE.**

The above table was prepared from materials believed to be authentic, and contains, with as much accuracy as is attainable, the number and rank of officers from the respective States to whom half-pay was promised by the resolution of Congress of the 21st of October, 1780, and commuted by the resolution of the 22d of March, 1783, to five years' full pay.

Foreign officers and chaplains are omitted; not supposed to be embraced by the bill.

**REMARKS.**

Whole number of officers, per table .................................................. 2,090
Estimated number who died within the first ten years after the Revolution, and who have been paid by their commutation of five years' full pay—say a fourth. ........................................... 1,045
Estimated for those who have died without lineal descendants, and those who, from various causes, will not be able to establish their claims—another fourth. ........................................... 1,045

Leaving the probable number of officers to be provided for at ................................ 1,045

Many of the descendants of officers have also died, which will still further reduce the number of claims.

Hon. Senator Evans assumed the half-pay of a captain of $240 per annum as the average of pay, which appears a large average, as it will be observed by the table that there are but 326 officers above that grade, whilst there are 1,120 officers below the rank of captain. At the half-pay of a captain for a year, the amount would be $250,800.
Take the average of life the government would have to provide for, for these 1,045 officers, at ten years, the amount that will be required to pay the allowances proposed to be made by the bill passed by the House of Representatives at the last session, would be $2,508,000.

The disproportion of officers above the grade of captain to those below that rank, as shown by the table, is so great that the half-pay of a captain is deemed too large an average. As a nearer approach to accuracy, it is suggested that the half-pay of a captain and the half-pay of a lieutenant be united, and the half of that sum be taken as the average of pay—thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half-pay of a captain</th>
<th>$240</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half-pay of a lieutenant</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The half of which would be $200. 1,045 officers, at $200 per annum, would be for a year, $209,000; or for ten years, as the average of life, the amount would be $2,090,000.

Under all circumstances, it is reasonable to suppose that but half the amount *originally* issued for commutation can now be claimed.