54TH CONGRESS, 2d Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { REPORT No. 2520.

EFFICIENCY OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

JANUARY 15, 1897.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. PARKER, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 10009.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9361) entitled "A bill to increase the efficiency of the Regular Army of the United States and to localize the recruiting of regiments in time of war," beg leave to submit the following report, and recommend in lieu of said bill the bill H. R. 10009, and that said substitute bill do pass.

In time of war we have been heretofore unable to increase our Army, whether regular or volunteer, except by calling out new and raw regiments under untried officers.

This is a bill to enable the regiments to be filled up and increased in time of war from within.

It is of the utmost importance to provide on the outbreak of war for the increase of the enlisted strength of every company, troop, and battery, and to enlist the active aid of the States by crediting the recruiting of certain regiments to certain localities. In case of necessity this scheme would give the Regular Army alone a war strength of over 80,000 men and officers. It is in accordance with the modern company reserve system of every other nation. The companies proposed are not found too large in other services, and they will not be too large to be handled by trained officers. This is strictly a war measure, intended to provide for emergencies, and effects no scheme of reorganization, while it will assist in any reorganization which the President in such emergency may deem advisable.

Your committee recommend amendment of the bill by substitute, enacting:

(1) That the President of the United States in time of war shall, in his discretion, be authorized to increase the number of noncommissioned officers and enlisted men in each troop of cavalry, battery of artillery, and company of infantry of the Army to a war strength not exceeding double the strength prescribed by law.

(2) That to facilitate the raising and recruiting of the war strength of said troops, batteries, and companies, the President, in his discretion, may order that each or any regiment of the Army shall in time of war draw its recruits from a State or States to be designated by the President, the recruits thus obtained to be counted as forming part of the quota of troops from said State called for by the United States.

This bill as amended is recommended by the Major-General Commanding and the War Department.

General Miles says:

The first section of the bill, giving the President power to increase the enlisted strength of the Army in time of war, is recommended for approval as necessary. In view of the changing enlisted strength prescribed for the peace establishment, it

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might be better to authorize the President to "double the prescribed enlisted strength both of noncommissioned officers and privates" on such occasion.

Probably in view of the changing conditions for recruiting it would be better to authorize the President, in his discretion, to localize recruiting for regiments without requiring him to do so.

The rest of General Miles's report is as to the sections that are struck out.

No army of the world, except ours, is without a company reserve system by which the trained forces can be immediately increased in case of necessity.

If it should be a question with a foreign nation as to whether we shall be attacked or not, our weakest point is our lack of a large enough permanent establishment. With one an attack would perhaps not be hazarded. Without one the trained armies of European nations would count on playing with our hastily raised levies. Take, for instance, England; her maximum force for foreign service is 60,000 men, which can be embarked in a week or so. While an organized army of 50,000 might constrain her to abandon the idea of war, a widely scattered force of 25,000, not 15,000 of which could be concentrated at any point, and which, as under present methods could not be increased, would put us at great disadvantage at the outset before new regiments could be made effective.

What is more, it would be much cheaper and better to increase our Army from within, as we have found by experience.

During the Mexican war the fighting was largely done by the old Army regiments, as shown by the losses. The success of this war is in great degree due to their training.

During the civil war our early disasters could have been avoided if we could have filled up our old and disciplined regiments. Instead of this they were allowed to fall off.

This was true both in the regulars and volunteers. The old regiments dwindled to mere skeletons, a nucleus of well-drilled veterans to be used only as a last resort. We were finally forced to abandon the suicidal policy of raising new regiments and to draft men to fill up our old ones.

With the machinery of administration of a company running smoothly and easily, as it does in an old regiment, the new recruit learns the duties of his new career; and such things as guard duty, the care of his arms, pitching tents, making himself as comfortable as possible, and a thousand other details which new regiments find a difficult problem to master, are acquired at once and easily; there is no hitch in the preparing and furnishing of food and other supplies, and his instruction in drill and maneuver is more promptly advanced, because he is not distracted by having to learn under difficulties the minor duties of a soldier.

Such a provision should perhaps be supplemented by a system by which men who have been honorably discharged should be retained on reserve rolls subject to call on an emergency. But it is desired not to complicate the bill by details.

The adoption of the three battalion organization for the infantry or the increase in the number of regiments does not interfere with this plan, but it is not made a part of it for the sake of simplicity.

The colonel can always divide his regiment as he pleases for the sake of efficiency. The whole organization of the Army is elastic, under and subject to the orders of the President, except the power to increase its numbers from within as provided by this bill, and which is, as above, "recommended as necessary."

In any sudden war we can not avoid disaster unless we have a respectable body of well-drilled troops at the first outbreak of hostilities. Our 250 companies of infantry, 120 of cavalry, 60 of artillery will under this bill produce a war strength of 50,000 infantry, 12,000 artillery, and 18,000 cavalry—total, 80,000. These recruits will be quickly assimilated and made efficient, and will be animated by the example of the old soldiers.

The second section is intended to popularize enlistment. Men like to go with their friends. Some of the regiments are now recruited from a single State. They find they get better men, who are proud of the corps; that men desert less because they dare not go to the home of their fellows, and that State pride gives pride to the regiment.

The localizing of recruitment will not interfere with the control or administration of the regiments by the United States, but it will make service with these regiments more popular and will enlist the pride of the States in the regiments which they recruit, and which will receive their aid and assistance.

This bill goes into no details. Its sole object is to give the Army elasticity, to make it more able to respond to any emergency. There may be no time to call Congress together. There was none at the fall of Sumter. Troops had to be called out first. Let the power be given to place the recruit where he will be most effective in the old regiments, whether of regulars or volunteers.

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