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LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
TO
THE CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE
OF
THE SENATE,
RELATIVE
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF
A QUARTER MASTER'S DEPARTMENT.

MARCH 12th, 1810.
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1810.

LETTERS.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

JANUARY 1st, 1810.

SIR,

THE inconveniencies and embarrassments to the service, together with the neglect and loss of property, arising from the irregular and unprecedented manner in which the quarter-master's department is conducted, render it my duty to suggest the propriety of some further legal provision on the subject. The defects of the present system originate in the laws. By the law, fixing the military peace establishment, provision is made for the appointment of three military agents, and as many assistant military agents, not exceeding one to each military post, as the President shall deem expedient. The law authorising an additional military force, provides for two brigade and eight regimental quarter-masters; the military agents and assistant military agents are appointed by the President; the brigade quarter-masters by the brigadiers, and the regimental quarter-masters by the colonels of regiments.

The result of this organization is, that the assistant military agents who ought to account for, and make returns to the military agents of all property delivered to them, are not held by a proper responsibility, the military agents having no power or influence in their appointment, nor authority to call them to account for mal-practices or neglect of duty. The brigade and regimental quarter-masters are as little under their controul.

It will also be perceived that no provision is made for the appointment of an officer, whose duty it should be to have charge of, and be responsible for the property appertaining to that department, to regulate and superintend the distribution of all supplies, *and to whom all subordinate officers should be accountable.*

In want of such an officer, the secretary of war has been obliged to perform the duties of quarter-master general. Under the military peace establishment those duties were laborious—since raising the additional military force they have necessarily increased, until it is suggested by experience that, if they were compatible with other duties required of him, the secretary of war cannot continue to discharge them either satisfactorily to himself or with justice to the public.

It is therefore respectfully suggested, that the President be authorised by law to appoint a quarter-master general, with rank in the army not exceeding the rank of _____ with pay and emoluments not exceeding those of _____

An assistant quarter-master general to be taken from the line of captains, whose compensation shall not exceed one half his monthly pay and emoluments.

As many deputy quarter-masters general, not exceeding four, as the service may require.

If taken from the line, their compensation not to exceed one half their monthly pay and emoluments; if not of the line, not to exceed the present compensation of the military agents.

As many assistant deputy quarter-masters, not exceeding one to each military post, as the service may require, to be taken from the line, and allowed eight dollars per month, (as provided by law for the present assistant military agents.)

Under this arrangement, the deputy quarter-masters general would perform the duties at present performed by the military agents; the assistant deputy quarter-masters those performed by the assistant military agents. Their compensation being the same, the additional expense to be incurred, will consist principally in the pay and emoluments of the quarter-master general, with the incidental expenses of his office, and in one additional deputy quarter-master general, if the service should require his appointment.

In time of peace, the proposed system being less complicated, and possessing a more regular and rigid accountability, would be far less expensive in its consequences; at the same time that it would instruct the officers in a branch of service acknowledged by military men to be of the first importance.

To meet a state of war without such an establishment, which has been justly denominated the RIGHT HAND of an army, would be to disregard the practice and experience of our own and every other nation, and expose to hazard and defeat every military operation.

With respectful consideration,

Your obedient servant,

W. EUSTIS.

The Hon. W. B. Giles, Chairman.

COMMITTEE CHAMBER,

JANUARY 13, 1810.

SIR,

IN obedience to the instructions of the committee of the Senate, to whom was referred the

message of the President of the United States, of the 3d instant, I now have the honor of requesting you to submit a plan to the committee, for establishing a general staff or quarter-master's department for the army of the United States. I am also instructed to intimate to you, sir, that it would be agreeable to the committee, to have the plan as much in detail as your convenience will permit.

I have also in charge from the committee, to ask of you, a statement of military munitions, which may be required by the present exigencies of the country; together with an estimate of the sum of money, which may be necessary for providing the same.

Be pleased, sir, to accept assurances of my high consideration, &c.

(Signed)

WM. B. GILES,

Chairman.

The honorable William Eustis,
secretary of war.

(COPY.)

WASHINGTON, January 15, 1810.

SIR,

YOUR favor of the 1st instant, respecting the establishment of a quarter-master's department for the army of the United States, addressed to me as chairman of a committee of the Senate, &c. was not put into my hands until late last evening.

It is probable if it had been sooner received, a part of my letter of the 13th instant, addressed to you in relation to that subject, might have been deemed unnecessary by the committee.

Be pleased, sir, to accept my respectful compliments, &c.

(Signed)

WM. B. GILES.

The honorable William Eustis.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

JANUARY 15, 1810.

SIR,

I TAKE the liberty of submitting for perusal and consideration the enclosed extracts from the letters of Mr. William Linnard, (a faithful and indefatigable military agent) which letters were accompanied with the names of several assistant military agents, to whom he had made disbursements and from whom he had not been able to procure satisfactory statements and settlements. They are among the evidences (daily occurring) which evince the necessity of a reformation in the quarter-master's department.

With respectful consideration,

Your obedient servant,

WM. EUSTIS.

Honorable Wm. B. Giles,

Chairman Committee of the Senate.

Extract of a letter from William Linnard, military agent, dated Philadelphia, September 15th, 1809.

"WITH respect to instructing the assistant agents to forward requisitions and other evidence, to shew on what authority expenditures have been made, I beg leave to observe, that whenever I have had occasion to write to a newly appointed agent, I have never failed to inform him, that such documents were indispensably necessary to accompany their vouchers; and altho' I have been very particular in those instructions little or no regard has been paid to them, and in fact in some instances, where the commanding officer was assistant agent, they have ridiculed the idea as extremely absurd to make requisitions on themselves. I do believe it to be impracticable to obtain those documents in every instance, unless the assistant agents were more stationary and the principals clothed with more authority than they possess. I shall however not lose sight of the object, but continue to use my endeavors to obtain them; and if I fail it ought not to add to my duties, already too much multiplied."

Extract of a letter from William Linnard, military agent, dated Philadelphia, December 7th, 1809.

"ON receipt of your instructions relative to the accounts, I wrote circular letters to all the assistant agents, and in order to enforce your injunctions, and that I might not be misunderstood, I

enclosed copies of your instructions to me. To press the necessity of a particular attention to the vouchers, I introduced the following quotation from your letter. "That in all their disbursements the authority of the commanding officer should accompany the voucher, particularly stating the object of the expenditure." Some of the assistant agents and officers have strangely construed those expressions, to require the authority the commanding officer had to make the requisition, and instead of writing to me for an explanation, they have delayed their accounts until the commanding officer could write to the secretary of war for his authority, or an explanation."

Washington City, Nov. 29th, 1809.

SIR,

ON the eve of leaving the army, (unless a prospect of active service should forbid it) permit me to address you on the important necessity of the quarter-master's department being restored, if it was only on the ground of economy; for to that department belongs the care of all stores belonging to the army. By the derangement of that department, were strict inquiry made, it would be found that more than 100,000 dollars have been lost in the course of a few years by the abolition of the quarter-master's department, and the introduction of a system of military agency. Instances may be found of characters being employed as agents, perfectly ignorant of military affairs and the great duties imposed on them, and at times unsupplied with the means necessary of performance.

The quarter-master general of an army, is an officer of great importance, and should be of high

rank, active, persevering and experienced, perfectly acquainted with the geographical situation and advantages of the country in which an army is to act, so as always to draw his supplies at the least possible injury and expense. He is primarily charged with all the articles belonging to his department: on him requisitions are to be made by the division quarter-masters for such stores as may be required for their divisions, which stores are to be issued on the returns of the brigade quarter-masters, and so to the regimental quarter-masters, who are to make and deliver returns of all stores on hand and delivered, once in three months, to the brigade quarter-masters, who will consolidate and transmit them to the division quarter-masters, who in like manner are to consolidate and transmit them to the quarter-master general, who will transmit them to the secretary of war.

Pursuing this principle, it can always be ascertained in what division, brigade or regiment, there may be delinquency.

You will please excuse the liberty I have taken in addressing you on a subject of great importance to the army either on a peace or war establishment. The importance of this subject will perhaps be more fully impressed by an application to military gentlemen who have experienced the inadequacy of the present system to the general welfare of our country.

Accept the assurances of my perfect esteem,

A. PARKER,

Col. 5th Infantry.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

JANUARY 20, 1810.

SIR,

IN answer to your letter of the thirteenth instant, requesting "a statement of military munitions which may be required by the present exigencies of the country, with an estimate of the sums which may be necessary for providing the same," I must ask the indulgence of the honorable committee in stating to them, that as the sums already appropriated by law, for completing the fortifications for the defence of the ports and harbors, which had been commenced or projected, were deemed sufficient for the object, no further appropriation on account of fortifications was proposed in the estimate for the present year. But, in case of war additional works will be required. Their situation, nature and extent, depending on the emergencies which may require them, cannot be ascertained. In many instances they will probably be of a temporary nature and constructed principally by the troops.

The island of Rhode Island, from the peculiarity of its local situation, bordering on the ocean, accessible at all seasons of the year, affording a safe and commodious harbor, fertile in itself, commanding other islands well stocked with provisions, and as a central station from which to harass the trade of the continent, offers to an enemy advantages not combined in any other part, and requires additional means of defence.

To meet the expenditures required at this and other places, it is therefore respectfully suggested, that the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand

dollars be appropriated on account of fortifications.

For supplying the several works with additional cannon, ammunition and implements; for mounting on travelling carriages, with proper equipments, a train of heavy ordinance for the defence of such points or places as are not protected by batteries; to mount and equip a train of field artillery; to provide arsenals for the deposit of small arms and artillery, with laboratories for preparing ammunition; and for procuring additional supplies of sulphur and salt petre, and other articles in the ordinance department, the sum of five hundred thousand dollars will be required.

The purchase of knapsacks, cartridge boxes, scabbards and belts and other equipments for infantry and cavalry, of tents and other articles in the quarter-masters' department, with suitable store houses for their preservation, may be estimated at four hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The munitions embraced in the foregoing estimates are considered as preparatory, requiring time to provide them, and admitting of such extension and additions as exigencies may require.

For future supplies of cannon with their implements, of small arms and accoutrements, and of clothing, if suitable encouragement was given, great reliance may be placed on the public and private armories, and on the foundaries and manufactories already in operation, the crude materials being the growth and produce of our own country.

Should the public exigencies render it necessary to call in to actual service an additional military force, provision should be made in season for furnishing

each non-commissioned officer and private with clothing for one year.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. EUSTIS.

The honorable W. B. Giles, Chairman.

COMMITTEE CHAMBER,

JANUARY 23, 1810.

SIR,

UNDER instructions from the committee of the Senate, to whom was referred the President's message of the 3d instant, I now have the honor to request you to furnish a written statement of all the military munitions, tents and camp equipage, now on hand, and as far as it can be done with convenience, the positions in which they are placed.

Be pleased, sir, to accept assurances of my high consideration, &c.

(Signed)

WM. B. GILES,

Chairman.

The honorable Wm. Eustis,

Secretary at War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

January 28th, 1810.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23d instant, requesting "a written statement of all the munitions, tents and camp equipage now on hand." The superintendent of military stores, at Philadelphia, has received instructions to make out a return conformably to the requisition of the honorable committee, which when received I will have the honor of transmitting to you.

With respectful consideration,

Your obedient servant,

W. EUSTIS.

The honorable W. B. Giles,

Chairman Committee of the Senate.

(COPY.)

WAR DEPARTMENT,

February 27th, 1810.

SIR,

IN compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 23d of January, I have the honor herewith to transmit to you "a written statement of all the military munitions, tents and camp equipage, now on hand, with the positions in which they are placed."

With respectful consideration,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

WM. EUSTIS.

Honorable Wm. B. Giles,

Chairman of Committee of the honorable Senate.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

February 4th, 1810.

SIR,

THE precarious state of foreign commerce, together with other considerations equally important, renders it extremely desirable that provision should be made for clothing the army of the United States from our own manufactures.

On the contracts for provisions made annually by this department, and on other contracts requiring a large capital, it has been customary to make advances of money in order to enable the contractors to fulfil their engagements.

An extension of this practice to supplies of clothing, would enable the purveyor to publish proposals and make his contracts in the same manner as the provision contracts are made.

From the encouragement which would thus be given to the several manufactories, a spirit of competition would be excited, improvements would be made in the works and in the several fabrics, and there can be no doubt that ample supplies would be offered on terms equally advantageous with those attending imported cloths, while the necessity of having recourse to importations in future, would be finally removed.

In order to ensure success to this desirable object, it will be necessary that the appropriation for clothing should be made in the year preceding that in which the clothing is to be delivered.

I have thought the subject of sufficient importance to be communicated to the honorable committee of which you are chairman,

And am with respectful consideration,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. EUSTIS.

Hon. W. B. Giles, Chairman.

W. H. WATKINS
1810

THE PROPOSAL FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A
NATIONAL BANK
AND THE
PROVISIONS
FOR THE
CURRENCY
AND THE
CREDIT
OF THE
NATION
AND THE
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W. H. WATKINS
1810