

Another plan was submitted, in order to remove the constitutional objection made to the preceding one, by the separate states composing the Union, who claim the right of regulating their respective militia.

It was proposed that 20,000 men be enrolled and trained, but not to leave their states, until called into active service by the Governors, on the requisition of the President.

There is no doubt that some general plan will be devised for the improvement of the militia, with the effect of placing a disposable force under the immediate authority of the executive government in time of war.

In the mean time should war break out, recurrence must be had to the old constitutional system of calling out drafts from the states bordering on the scene of action for a short period of service; but this has been deemed an inefficient and "ruinous expedient."

It is possible that the President would, as on former occasions, be authorized to "accept the services of volunteers," to a certain amount, and these men would be incorporated in the existing corps of the regular army, and in new corps of the same description.

In the late war, after the failures of the first campaign, when militia were principally employed, leave was given to raise fifty battalions; of which many were raised, and conducted themselves in a very creditable manner, under officers taken from the army, and otherwise selected with care. There would be less difficulty now in providing efficient officers.

In like manner when disturbances were apprehended between New Brunswick and Maine a few years since, the President was authorized to "accept the services of 60,900 volunteers."

The establishment of West Point secures an ample provision of well educated officers for the regiment to which such volunteers would be transferred.

I do not anticipate much difficulty in providing for the commissariat and medical departments.

In my opinion there would be no difficulty in collecting a sufficient force upon the frontier, within a very short period, to justify the undertaking of offensive operations.

There might be a deficiency of some of the requisites for long and arduous campaigns; but the season for active operations is short in this country, and the proximity of the United States to the theatre of war, would facilitate the transmission of supplies necessary for the occasion.

It is not likely that a large proportion of their disposable force would be diverted from active operations on this frontier for the protection of the sea-board frontier of the States. It is too extensive for a force of this description, and must be left to measures of local defence.

The sea coast may be harassed and insulted, but no apprehensions can be entertained of invasion by an army upon a large scale. The occupation of Washington, and the destruction of public buildings there, is considered more as an insult than an injury, and not likely to be repeated.

I have already adverted to the superiority of the United States upon all the lakes except Ontario, and they have, it is too probable, ampler means to retain, than we possess to contest it.

There is no doubt that such a contest is contemplated by all parties in the United States, as likely to take place at some time, and perhaps at no distant period.

I prefer seeking for proof of this general feeling, or rather conviction, in the official documents of the Government at different periods, than in any hypothetical proposition of individuals, however well supported by reasoning or appearances.

A stronger proof could not, I think, be produced than from the approved plan, for the construction of fortresses for the defence of the Northern frontier, from whence it is evident the United States have nothing to fear.

These works, from their position and character, are intended to form a basis of future offensive operations against Canada, as will, I think, appear from the following extract from a late Report to Congress from the War Department:—

"The Northern frontier of the United States from Lake Superior o
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