

JOHN MIDWINTER.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 323.]

JANUARY 4, 1838.

Mr. McCLELLAN, of New York, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to which were referred the petition and papers of John Midwinter, report:

That petitioner states his age to be forty-seven years; that he is a native of New York; that he was employed by Henry Eckford, a contractor of ships of war by the United States; that he was a blacksmith, and signed articles to serve in that capacity; went in December, 1814, and discharged, in consequence of peace, in the last of March or beginning of April; received one dollar and seventy-five cents per day, and found; that he was accustomed to work with stone coal, a close fire, but at Sackett's Harbor had to work with charcoal, which makes an open fire; this produced intense smarting and pain; his eyes became diseased; had to travel from Sackett's Harbor to Albany in an open sleigh; after he returned to New York his sight became worse, until, in the course of the year, he was totally blind; states he has a wife and three children; that he supported his family by selling books and getting subscriptions; had a boy to lead him about.

Lucretia Freeman, sister of petitioner says, on oath, that he left New York in December, 1814, for Sackett's Harbor, being employed by Mr. Eckford, in the United States service; he was then in perfect health; he returned March following; his eyes were weak and sore, so as to prevent his working at his trade as blacksmith; his eyes continued bad until November following, when they were entirely destroyed, and he has been blind ever since.

Mary Rich testifies that she knew petitioner to be employed by Mr. Eckford, at Sackett's Harbor; that when he returned, shortly after peace was declared, his eyes were diseased, and he was unable to work at his occupation; and he became entirely blind.

John McGlaughlin testifies that in January, 1815, he (this deponent) was in the service of the United States, under Mr. Eckford, contractor for building ships at Sackett's Harbor; and that John Midwinter, who has since lost his eyes, was a contractor as a blacksmith at the same time and place, under Mr. Eckford, and was then afflicted with sore eyes.

John Lozier certifies that John Midwinter was engaged by him in the city of New York, in the fall of 1814, to go to Sackett's Harbor, as a
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blacksmith, to do work for Government ; and that said petitioner was so employed, he verily believes, as Mr. Eckford, at different times, advised deponent to pay his monthly half pay to his family in New York.

J. T. Bedell, rector of St. Andrew's church, of Philadelphia, states that petitioner is an honest and pious character, and in communion with his church.

The petitioner was personally before the committee and examined. And upon such examination, it further appeared that there were a large number of workmen employed in building the Government ships at Sackett's Harbor ; that they were daily expecting an attack from the British, to destroy the ships they were building ; that the workmen were provided with arms and ammunition to defend themselves and vessels, in case of attack ; that it was understood, when he signed the articles binding him to service ; that the laborers employed were to go to Sackett's Harbor to assist in building the vessels not only, but to defend themselves and the vessels in case of attack ; and that said articles of service were considered in the nature of an enlistment, and that in consequence of this understanding, numbers were deterred from going and hazarding their lives in such service.

The committee, after considering and weighing the facts in the case of said Midwinter, were of opinion that some relief ought to be extended to him. They therefore made the following order :

Resolved, That a bill be reported for his relief, granting him eight dollars per month from the 1st of January, 1837.