

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 20, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. PUGH submitted the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Public Lands, to whom was referred the petition of Benjamin Ward, of the State of Maine, in favor of granting bounty land to the privateersmen of the United States, imprisoned at Dartmoor, during the war of 1812 with Great Britain, has considered the same, and ask leave now to report:

That concurring entirely with the opinion expressed by the Commissioner of Pensions, in his letter of February 2, 1860, herewith submitted, and referring to the report on the petition of Allen Gaylord and other citizens of Ohio, for bounty lands, at this session, it only remains for the committee to recommend that the prayer of the petitioner be not granted.

PENSION OFFICE, February 2, 1860.

SIR: I have the honor to return herewith the petition of Benjamin Ward, of Maine, praying, in behalf of "himself and the survivors of the American prisoners, who were imprisoned in Dartmoor prison during the war of 1812, such aid by an allowance of pension and land," as Congress may think proper to bestow, and to submit the following brief statement in reference thereto.

What number of prisoners were at Dartmoor during the war of 1812, or what classes of persons they composed, I have no means at hand of determining with accuracy. The number is, however, believed to have been not less than six thousand, and that they were mainly privateersmen and merchantmen.

For such, if any, as were of the United States navy, land is provided by existing laws, and pensions also if they were disabled. Privateersmen were also granted pensions for disability incurred in an engagement with the enemy, until the privateer pension fund became exhausted, and such as are now on the rolls are paid by the United States, but no new pensions of this class are now allowed. For "those persons" (of whatever description) "who were wounded at Dartmoor prison, in England, in the month of April, 1815," and "the widows and children of such as were killed or who died in consequence of wounds received there," pensions were provided by the act of April 2,

1816, (Stat. 6, p. 160;) but no other provision, in the form of pension, and none in the nature of land, has yet been provided for.

Congress has heretofore refused otherwise to extend the benefits of the pension and bounty-land laws to privateersmen, and has never before, so far as I know, been asked to extend them to merchantmen. Were it to do so, the number of beneficiaries would be almost beyond limit. The mere fact of *imprisonment at Dartmoor* is, in my judgment, no more just ground of claim to pension or bounty-land than the imprisonment frequently suffered elsewhere by our gallant soldiers and seamen.

It may be proper to say that in computing the length of service for land or pension, the time spent as prisoners of war has always been taken into the account.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

GEORGE C. WHITING,
Commissioner.

Hon. GEORGE E. PUGH,
Senate of the United States.