

WASHINGTON, December 24, 1824.

SIR : I have had it in contemplation for some time, and am prompted to the suggestion at this moment by an increased sense of its importance, to propose, for the use of the army, a compilation of the acts of Congress relating thereto. It would embrace all laws of that description, enacted since the formation of the present government, whether relating to organization, discipline, or administration; and if found convenient, would be arranged under those distinct heads, with a view to facilitate reference. The laws relating to the militia, might also be embraced in the shape of an appendix.

The importance and necessity of such a work, are believed to be apparent. That usually denominated the "*Blue Book*," cannot, with propriety, be called a substitute for the one proposed. Besides being extremely deficient in matter, its arrangement is regarded as defective.

The propriety of rendering all the *penal* laws accessible to those on whom they are to operate, is sufficiently obvious—and it is believed to be an object of some moment, that the laws relating to organization and administration, though repealed or modified, should, also, be placed within the reach of the army. If they answer no other end by assisting in the fair interpretation of subsequent acts, they would, perhaps, be important, as presenting a complete and connected history of the military legislation—a point on which, there is some dearth of information. Scattered as those laws are at present, through six ponderous volumes of the statutes at large, it is scarcely possible that they ever can become sufficiently known to the army.

A copious index, with now and then a note of reference, indicating essential connections between laws of different dates, would be all that I should add to a naked copy of the laws themselves, taken from an authentic source.

Should the proposition meet your approbation, I would, very cheerfully, devote my leisure to its accomplishment.

I have the honor, &c. &c.

T. CROSS.

Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN, *Secretary of War.*

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, December 30, 1824.

SIR : I have received and considered your letter of the 24th instant, suggesting a compilation of the acts of Congress, relating to the army and the militia.

The proposition meets my entire approbation, and you are authorized to proceed to the execution of the work as early, and with as much despatch, as your other duties will permit. The plan laid down in your letter will be adhered to, should it not be found impracticable, from the nature of the laws, to observe the classification proposed.

As all the laws will be given, it is desirable, for the sake of practical convenience, to distinguish such as have been repealed by subsequent enactments. A remark to that effect where it is obvious, and a note of reference to direct the readers attention where it is matter of doubt, should, therefore, be inserted.

I have the honor, &c. &c.

J. C. CALHOUN.

Maj. T. CROSS, *United States Army.*

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