

Mr. Freeman, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

### REPORT.

*To the Senate and House of Delegates of Maryland :*

The Joint Committee on Pensions beg leave to submit the following Report : Your Committee have had referred to them about seventy petitions for pensions from soldiers of the war of 1812, and widows of soldiers. These claims are of various kinds, and in order to properly understand their nature it is necessary to give a brief explanation of the Pension Laws of the State. Your Committee find that previous to the present Constitution of the State there was an officer called a Pension Commissioner, to whom applications could be made, and, upon proper proof, pensions granted. The Constitution abolishes the said office and forbids the enactment by the Legislature of any general pension law. In 1870 we find, Chapter 477, a special Act, placing on the pension roll the names of about 1,500 pensioners. We have no doubt but that these names were thus specially mentioned in the Acts so as to avoid the Constitutional prohibition, and it was evidently the design to place upon the roll the names of all entitled to pensions. It appears, however, that many names were left off and others not correctly spelled. Accordingly, we find in 1872, 1874 and 1876, numerous petitions for pensions presented to the Legislature, and in 1876, Chapter 320, an Act was passed placing about one hundred additional names upon the roll. At the present session we have received about seventy more applications. These applications are : 1st. Those whose names have never been on the roll. 2nd. Those omitted in 1870 and replaced in 1876, asking six years back pay. 3rd. Those whose names have been misspelled, or misprinted. 4th, Widows not married within five years of the close of the war, asking that this restriction be removed. Your Committee have freely consulted the Comptroller of the Treasury, and he has given the opinion that the pension system as managed, opened a wide door to frauds upon the Treasury. Your Committee, therefore, prepared a bill to provide for additional safeguards in the payment of pensions. While this matter was under consideration, information was received that the Congress of the United States had just passed a very liberal Pension Law, giving to soldiers of the war of 1812, and their widows, a pension of \$96 per annum. This Act prohibits the payment of such pension to those now receiving pension of a less amount, except so far as concerns the surplus. This Act was submitted to the Attorney General, and he gave the opinion that pensioners re-