

REPORT

Of the Committee on Naval Affairs, on the memorial of Thomas Shields, accompanied with a bill, authorizing the payment of a sum of money to Thomas Shields.

JANUARY 4, 1819.

Read, and with the bill, committed to the committee of the whole, to-morrow.

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Thomas Shields, have had the same under consideration, and submit the following

REPORT:

The memorialist states, that commodore Shaw, whilst he commanded the naval forces of the United States on the New Orleans station, caused to be built a public storehouse for the use of the United States; that this storehouse was built at the bay of St. Louis, on a lot belonging to the memorialist, and by him voluntarily tendered for that purpose; that the said house at the time of the attack of the enemy at that point, on the 13th of December, 1814, contained stores (for the supply of the crews of vessels attached to the station,) belonging to the memorialist of the value of \$4,887 96. That previous to the attack of the enemy, the memorialist had erected, principally at his own expense, a small two gun battery, for the protection of the said store and the property contained in it; from which a fire so steady and well directed was kept up, that the enemy was baffled in his several attempts to effect a landing, till the night of the 13th of December, 1814, when a positive order was received by the person having charge of the said store, from lieutenant Jones, commanding the detachment of naval force on the station, directing the same to be blown up and destroyed, which was accordingly done; that adjacent to the said public store, was a building belonging to the memorialist, and materials for other buildings of the value of \$1,693 10; to which the fire produced by the burning of the public store, extended, whereby the said building and materials were totally destroyed. The memorialist states his whole loss occasioned by the burning of

the public store aforesaid, to amount to the sum of \$6,581 6 cents, for which he prays remuneration from Congress, if they shall think his claim just.

The committee having considered this case with attention, are of opinion, that it is supported by the testimony exhibited. The stores which were properly destroyed by the burning of the public storehouse, by order of the United States officer, commanding on the station, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, were lodged at that place by the memorialist, for the use of the naval force in the neighborhood; they were of the kind and quality always furnished for such purposes, by pursers in the navy, which was the office held by the memorialist, and the public store from which they could be easily and quickly put on board the vessels requiring them, appears to have been the most natural place for their deposit; that independent of the merits of the memorialist, in voluntarily tendering a situation for the erection and use of this building for public purposes, and erecting a battery principally at his own expense, the committee think, under all the circumstances of the case, compensation ought to be made to the memorialist for the loss of the stores aforesaid, and his house and building materials adjacent to the said storehouse, and consumed by the fire which caught from the burning of the same; and for this purpose, they herewith report a bill.