IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 19, 1824.

Mr. SMITH, from the Committee on Finance, to which was referred the memorial of the President and Directors of the Merchants' Bank of Newport, Rhode Island, made the following

REPORT:

That the memorialists state, that the Merchants' Bank of Newport, Rhode Island, went into operation in June, 1817, and that such was the construction of its charter, that the Directors could not avail themselves of that part of the stamp law which allowed banks to commute, by paying one and a half per cent. on their dividends, and were, therefore, compelled to send their notes to the office to be stamped, which was done, and the sum of $313 58 was paid for those stamps, which amount they pray may be refunded, or so much thereof as Congress may deem to be equitable. The reasons assigned are, that the stamp law was repealed, the repeal to take place from the 31st December, 1817, only six months after their Bank went into operation; that, if their charter would have allowed them to commute for the one and a half per cent. on their dividends, they would have been relieved from any payment, or would have had little to pay, or little or no dividend could have been declared in so short a time after its existence. And they further represent, that the Banks which did commute, were, by the repealing act, compelled to pay a *pro rata* only, on such dividends for the portion of a year that might remain from the time of the last annual payment; and, also, that all persons who had any stamped paper after the said 31st day of December, 1817, were entitled to receive the amount they had paid for such stamps from the Collector, deducting only therefrom seven and a half per centum on the value of the stamps.

The committee further report, that the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted.

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