26th Congress, 1st Session. Rep. No. 64. Ho. of Reps.

RICHARD J. JONES.

February 29, 1840.
Laid on the table.

Mr. Giddings, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee of Claims, to whom was committed the petition of Richard J. Jones, report:

That the petitioner sets forth that in 1813 he was employed in transporting the mail of the United States from Annapolis to Centreville, in Queen Ann county, Maryland, by the way of Broad creek and Queenstown, agreeably to contract made by the petitioner with the Post Office Department in the year 1811: that, for the purpose of complying with his contract, he had two sloops employed in said service: that, whilst said sloops were lying at Broad creek, on Kent island, in May, 1813, a force was sent from his Britannic Majesty's ships then lying in Chesapeake bay, and said sloops were there burnt by the common enemies of the country, for which the petitioner asks compensation.

This claim was referred to the Committee of Claims of the House of Representatives at the 1st session of the 17th Congress, and was then reported upon unfavorably. Since that time some additional testimony has been furnished, and the question is now again presented for the consideration of the committee. The committee, however, deem it unnecessary to make any remarks upon the proof presented, which is, in the opinion of the committee, of no importance in deciding upon the claim. The allowance of the indemnity asked would, in the opinion of the committee, establish a precedent never before recognised by this Government. It is believed that no instance can be found in which the United States have allowed a claim under circumstances similar to the present. (Vide Reports of Committee of Claims, vol. 7, page 435; vol. 5, page 204.) The petitioner agreed to carry the United States mail from Annapolis to Centreville, for which he received the compensation stipulated; but he complains that while he was thus employed, his vessels were burnt by the British forces. It is not pretended that Government agreed to insure the vessels of the petitioner, and it is not easy to discover on what principle indemnity is sought. Had the applicant employed his vessels in transporting articles belonging to an individual, and they had been burnt, it is believed that he would not have asked indemnity from the person who had thus employed him. The loss of the vessels was a misfortune to the owner, but that fact furnishes no claim upon the United States. The committee, therefore, recommend to the House, for adoption, the following resolution:

Resolved, That the petitioner is not entitled to relief.

Blair & Rives, printers.

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FEBRUARY 29, 1840.

Laid on the table.

Mr. Grennell, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

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