

Report No. 213.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 213.]

---

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

---

MARY B. RENNER.

FEBRUARY 9, 1848.

---

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

REPORT:

*The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the petition of Mary B. Renner, made the following report:*

It appears, from the testimony in this case, that during the late war with Great Britain the petitioner's husband was engaged extensively at the city of Washington in the manufacture of rope and other cordage for the navy.

• That when the said city was threatened with invasion, he had on hand in his walk near the navy-yard a large quantity of cordage, rope, and twine, suitable for the public use; and justly fearing, in case of invasion, the destruction of his property by the enemy, he employed in season a sufficient number of "long-boats" to remove all the stock from his manufactory to a place of safety beyond the enemy's reach; but the long-boats were taken away from his service, and impressed into the service of the United States to remove Young's brigade across the Potomac, by order of General Winder. He then obtained carts; but these were impressed by the government to remove the books and papers from the public offices. He then hired wagons; but these were also impressed by the United States to remove the property of the public; and though he at first remonstrated, he acquiesced in the patriotic decision that "*private considerations must give way for the public good.*"

Thus deprived of every means that industry and vigilance could make available, frustrated by the government in three energetic efforts to save his property by removal, he was compelled to leave it to its fate.

The enemy soon after entered the city, discovered the naval stores in his walk, set fire to and totally destroyed all his stock,

implements, and buildings. Compensation was made in part by the government for the cordage destroyed, but no compensation has been made for the ropewalk destroyed. The ropewalk contained cordage, &c., evidently marked as public property. The contents being fired by the enemy, the building inevitably shared its fate, and was consumed. But for the government preventing the removal of the naval stores by impressing for its *own use* the owner's means of transportation, the walk itself would have been empty and unoccupied, and would not have been destroyed. Private property, according to the usages of civilized warfare, is always respected.

The committee deem the petitioner entitled to the value of the ropewalk destroyed by the enemy, on account of its having stores within it which, but for the interference of the government, would have been removed and saved, as its destruction was an inevitable consequence upon the destruction of the moveable property.

The committee therefore report a bill.