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Charles Sumption

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CHARLES SUMPTION.

FEBRUARY 25, 1846.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. J. A. ROCKWELL, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the petition of Charles Sumption, report :

That, admitting every fact alleged in the petition (which is annexed hereto) to be fully proved, the petitioner has no legal claim upon the treasury for indemnification. It has not been the custom of any government to tax its people to provide means to liquidate claims for damages sustained by individuals from the outrages and depredations of barbarous nations and savage tribes. Were it otherwise, enormous sums of money would have to be levied upon the people to obtain means for the payment of all the losses sustained by numerous individuals since the formation of the government. Many millions of dollars would be required to pay for the property wantonly destroyed during the Indian and British wars.

Were governments to indemnify their citizens for all property destroyed by hostile enemies, civilized and savage, armies would soon degenerate into marauding parties; and that one, of opposing nations, which most wantonly ravaged the other, would be sure to succeed by bankrupting the treasury of the outraged opponent. Houses and other property would be destroyed for the express purpose of exhausting the treasury of the invaded nation. The practice would thus hold out a direct premium—a large inducement—for the devastation of countries in time of war.

Hence, instead of this, nations labor to preserve peace, and, in time of war, to protect individuals; but they never insure citizens an immunity from the ravages of invading and overpowering hostile forces. All good governments zealously labor to defend their citizens from all external and internal violence; but are not authorized, in case of failure to provide perfect security for every individual, to levy a tax upon the rest to indemnify any loss he may sustain, despite their united efforts to guard him from harm.

The committee are of opinion that the following resolution ought to pass :
Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioner ought not to be granted.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in general Congress met :

Your petitioner, Charles Sumption, now a resident of Randolph county, Indiana, humbly represents, that, in the year 1814, your petitioner was re-

