

NEW YORK PILOTS.

JANUARY 12, 1838.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. CURTIS, from the Committee on Commerce, made the following

REPORT:

*The Committee on Commerce, to which was referred the memorial of the pilots of the port of New York, praying a repeal or modification of the act of Congress of the 2d of March, 1837, concerning pilots, made the following report:*

That the act of Congress, a repeal or modification of which the petitioners seek, is in the following words:

“ That it shall and may be lawful for the master or commander of any vessel coming into or going out of any port situate upon waters which are the boundary between two States, to employ any pilot, duly licensed or authorized by the laws of either of the States bounded on said waters, to pilot said vessel to or from said port, any law, usage, or custom, to the contrary notwithstanding.”

Since the passage of that act of Congress, the Legislature of the State of New Jersey have, by law, provided a pilot system for that State, and established a board of commissioners, or examiners, who discharge the duty of licensing pilots after due examination of their qualifications; and pilots, thus licensed by the authorities of New Jersey, have provided themselves with suitable boats, and are now in active competition with the New York pilots, in the business of piloting vessels to and from the port of New York.

The petitioners, pilots, residing in and acting under the pilot laws of the State of New York, complain of the interference of the New Jersey pilots, which has arisen under the act of Congress of the 2d of March, 1837, and allege that justice to them requires the repeal or modification of that act. The committee have given careful consideration to their memorial, but are unable to perceive the force of their objections. The substance and point of their complaint is, that whereas they formerly enjoyed, *exclusively*, the whole business of pilotage at the port of New York, they are now compelled to compete with the New Jersey pilots, and with them to take their chance of employment by boarding inward-bound vessels far at sea, and to rely upon their reputation for skill, and other acceptable qualities of character among ship masters, for employment to conduct outward-bound vessels to sea.

Thomas Allen, print.

The Chamber of Commerce of New York, all the marine insurance companies of that city, and numerous ship owners and ship masters of that port, have earnestly remonstrated against a repeal of the said act of Congress. These remonstrants represent that the close monopoly formerly enjoyed by the pilots of New York had led to results very unfavorable to the convenience, safety, and interests, of all concerned in the maintenance of a good and efficient system of pilotage. That the effects of competition, introduced by the act of the 2d of March, 1837, have been most advantageous to the shipping interests of that port. That whereas, formerly, vessels arriving off the port of New York were often delayed, and life and property thereby endangered for the want of pilots, inward-bound vessels are now boarded by the pilots at a distance of from twenty to eighty miles at sea.

The memorialists admit that the law of which they complain was enacted at the solicitation of those "who might be supposed most deeply interested in the promotion of judicious legislation upon this subject." The committee have ascertained that the persons thus referred to, as the applicants for this law, were the merchants, ship owners, ship masters, marine insurance companies, and Chamber of Commerce of the city of New York; the same parties who now remonstrate against any repeal or modification of the act. Under these circumstances, your committee are unanimously of the opinion that the act of the 2d of March, 1837, "concerning pilots," has been beneficial in its operation to the interests of commerce; that the petitioners have presented no valid reason for its repeal or modification, and that it ought not to be disturbed; they therefore report the following resolution, and ask its adoption by the House.

*Resolved*, That the prayer of the pilots of New York, for a repeal or modification of the act of Congress of the 2d of March, 1837, "concerning pilots," be denied.