

UNITED STATES PRISON IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 444.]

JUNE 30, 1854.

Mr. MAY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on the Judiciary, to whom was referred the memorial of the grand jury attending the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York, asking that a prison may be erected in that city for the use of the general government, has considered the same, and obtained further information on the subject, and beg leave to report:*

That the prayer of the memorial ought at once to be granted.

Now and heretofore the prisoners under process of the United States, and also witnesses who have not been able to give a recognizance for their appearance, are and have been confined in the prisons of the city of New York, and adjoining counties when the city prisons have not afforded accommodations for them.

The prisons thus used are generally remote from the United States court-house, and do not afford either safe or comfortable quarters for the large number of such prisoners.

It has sometimes happened that persons of different sexes have been thrown together in such confinement, and usually that their health has suffered by reason of the small and badly constructed apartments occupied by them. Surely such treatment will be a great reproach to the government if it be allowed to continue after it is brought to the notice of Congress; especially so, when it is considered that such prisoners, being only held for trial, are presumed to be innocent until convicted; and many of them, upon trial, are found to have been unjustly accused. Besides, a large number are held as witnesses, being too poor or friendless to procure sureties for their appearance to testify.

But aside from the common duties which humanity enjoins in the treatment of prisoners, there are strong reasons why the exclusive jurisdiction over a prison should be exercised by the United States government in the city of New York.

Under the extradition clauses of our treaties, and also under the constitution and laws of the United States, there are frequent occasions to confine persons arrested and detained in that city. It is important, as experience has shown, to the safe-keeping of such prisoners, and the due execution of our treaties and the laws, that a place of confinement, under the charge and responsibility of a United States officer, and its sole jurisdiction, should be provided.

The committee report herewith a bill.

