

INDIANA METHODIST CHURCH, OF NORFOLK COUNTY,
VIRGINIA.

MARCH 3, 1883.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Mr. A. HERR SMITH, from the Committee on War Claims, submitted
the following

REPORT:

The Committee on War Claims, to whom was referred the petition of the trustees of the Indiana Methodist Church, of Norfolk County, Virginia, report as follows:

The petitioners ask an appropriation of \$500 for the benefit of the Indiana Methodist Church, for the material of said church taken and used by the Army of the United States during the late war; and allege in substance, that the property of said church was vested in a board of five trustees; that said property consisted of a church edifice, a frame building, for the worship of said church association, which was organized from persons of Indian descent; that in the month of June, 1863, a portion of the United States Army, known as the Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, Twenty-first Connecticut Volunteers, and the Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, camped near the said church, and did then and there take, appropriate, and use the material of which the said church was built; wherefore Congress is asked to make an appropriation to repair the losses so suffered by the church as aforesaid.

The Commission of Claims was a tribunal expressly created for the adjudication of claims like this one; and that Commission held that, "when buildings are torn down, if the materials are taken to erect other buildings for the use of the Army, such materials thereby become supplies, and their value, as materials for the purpose for which they are used, is paid to the owner."

The records of that tribunal show that these claimants did not avail themselves of the privilege given them to prove their claim, and by their own laches the statute bars it.

This is but one of a large number of cases of losses to religious, charitable, and educational institutions resulting from the ravages of war. It is to be regretted that such institutions shared the common fate of all other species of property upon the theater of warlike operations. But the committee are compelled to meet the facts as they are, and, harsh as the rule may seem to be, to hold that it is utterly impracticable for the government to repair the damages sustained, and make the waste places green again.

The committee report adversely, and recommend the petition do lie upon the table.