

[No report.]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JUNE 26, 1856.

Read twice, and committed to the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.

Mr. MORRILL, from the Committee on the Territories, reported the following bill :

A BILL

To punish and prevent the practice of polygamy in the Territories of the United States, and other places.

1 Whereas it is admitted that polygamy is permitted by the
2 municipal regulations of one of the Territories of this Union,
3 and is sought to be justified on the ground that this abomina-
4 tion in a Christian country is a religious rite of the inhabitants
5 of said Territory ; and whereas no principle of self-govern-
6 ment or citizen sovereignty can require or justify the practice
7 of such moral pollution : Therefore,

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That*
3 if any person or persons, being married and an inhabitant of
4 any Territory of the United States or other place over which
5 the United States possess exclusive jurisdiction, shall inter-

6 marry with any person or persons, or cohabit with any person
7 or persons, or live with any person or persons as partners,
8 acknowledging conjugal relations, the former husband or wife
9 being alive, he, she, or they so offending shall, on conviction
10 thereof, pay a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, and be
11 imprisoned not less than two years nor more than five years:
12 *Provided, nevertheless,* That this section, or anything therein
13 contained, shall not extend to any person or persons whose hus-
14 band or wife shall absent him or herself one from the other
15 for the space of five years, the one of them not knowing the
16 other to be living within that time, nor to any person or per-
17 sons who shall be, at the time of such marriage, divorced by
18 competent authority, or to any person or persons whose former
19 marriage, by sentence of competent authority, shall have been
20 declared void.