

Report of the  
Committee.

Subsequently, during the progress of the war, its object was modified so as to include the abolition of slavery by Constitutional amendment. The amendment was proposed by two-thirds of both Houses of Congress, as then constituted, eleven States by their own act having withdrawn their representatives. Those States, after the close of the war and the reorganization of their State Governments, by their Legislatures, ratified the amendment. The Thirty-Ninth Congress recognized those State Governments as legal by accepting the ratification of the amendment by their Legislatures, and claiming and exercising the power to pass the Civil Rights Bill and Freedman's Bureau Bill, in virtue of that amendment. The faith of the Federal Government and of the State of Maryland was thus solemnly pledged to the Southern States and to the world, down to the close of the war, that its object was to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality and rights of the several States unimpaired, and that as soon as those objects should be accomplished, the war ought to cease.

Whatever view of their duty in this regard may be taken by those now entrusted with the power of the Federal Government, the Legislature of Maryland cannot hesitate to assert the purpose of the State, to the utmost of her ability, to maintain her faith inviolate before the world.

We are therefore clearly of the opinion that the amendment in question, having been proposed by two-thirds of a Congress from which the Senators and Representatives of eleven States of this Union were forcibly and illegally excluded, was not proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution, and that, that fact of itself, presents an insuperable obstacle to the ratification of the amendment by the Legislature of Maryland. But if this fact were otherwise, your Committee are of opinion that the State of Maryland could not voluntarily assent to any of the propositions contained in the proposed amendment.

The passions of men, when highly excited, are too apt to render them blind to, and reckless of, consequences. In the midst of high political