

2d. The memorial of Charles Murdock, asking relief by a modification of his contracts with the Directors of the Penitentiary and the equitable settlement of claims in dispute between them.

3d. An investigation of the manufacturing department of the institution generally.

4th. An examination of the financial affairs and condition, and,

5th. An enquiry into its general management and discipline.

Taking the points to be examined in the order they appear, the committee commenced with the memorial of Messrs. Duvall and Howard.

The memorial states that on the 3d of October, 1859, they entered into a written contract with the Directors of the Maryland Penitentiary for the rent of certain shops and yard room, and the employment of convict labor in the manufacture of barrels, and in the prosecution of that business had invested a large amount of money in the purchase of patent rights, machinery, and the necessary stock to carry it on successfully, that while in the prosecution of a successful business, on the 23d of December, 1860, their work shops were fired by some of the convicts, and their property almost destroyed, entailing, as they allege, a loss over and above the amount of insurance of \$23,150, and avers that said fire was caused partly by the refusal of the Directors to permit them to have their own watchman on the premises on Sunday, (the fire having occurred on that day,) whereby their property was left in an unprotected state on Sundays, and partly by a want of proper discipline on the part of the officers of the institution, by which the convicts were enabled to obtain access to the shops and commit the incendiary act; and the memorialists plead that as the loss was by no act of their own, but was indirectly caused by the officers of the State, as above stated, that the Legislature should grant them relief by reimbursing in whole, or in part, the loss sustained.

The magnitude of the claim, and the importance of it to the memorialists, who were entirely ruined by the fire, as well as to the State, whose finances are not in a condition to bear any burdens that are justly avoidable, demanded of the committee the most careful and thorough examination of the case, it was conducted and argued by eminent counsel on both sides. Numerous witnesses were examined, whose evidence will be found in the proceedings of the committee, pages 1 to 53,