

to the probable result of the deliberations of a Convention, at this moment, are of course very wide apart. To the Committee, the single fact of the military occupation of our soil by the Northern troops in the service of the government, against the wishes of our people, and the solemn protest of the State Executive, is a sufficient and conclusive reason for postponing the subject, to a period when the Federal ban shall be no longer upon us. It does not become the dignity of the State of Maryland to attempt the performance of an act of sovereignty, absolute or qualified, at a moment when not only her sovereignty but her Federal equality is subordinated to the law of the drum-head. No election, held at such a time and with such surroundings, could by possibility be fair or free. No result which could be reached by it would command the confidence or secure the willing obedience of the people. The Committee therefore feel it their duty to recommend the postponement of the subject for the present.

For reasons almost identical, the Committee take leave to report against the arming of the State, and the organization of our military defenses at this time. If the holding of a Sovereign Convention were not regarded as a hostile movement by the Federal government, the re-establishment of the military force of the State, in a condition of present efficiency, certainly would be, however unjustly. It avails nothing to say that the arming and organization of a suitable militia, are declared by the Constitution of the United States to be "necessary to the security of a free State," and therefore especially guaranteed to us as peaceful and fundamental rights. The Constitution is silenced by the bayonets which surround us, and it is not worth while for us to fancy ourselves beneath its ægis. It would be criminal as well as foolish for us to shut our eyes to the fact that we will not be permitted to organize and arm our citizens, let our rights and the Constitution be what they may.—The interview of our Commissioners with the President sets that point at rest. It is not easy for free men to realize such a state of things; but it is not our fault that we are helpless, nor our shame that our helplessness is abused.

The Committee respectfully recommend that no action be taken towards the re-organization of the militia at this time, or the doing of any act which might be construed into hostility to the Government, and that, if any purchase of arms be indispensable, it be confined, at the farthest, to such reasonable quantity as may be manufactured in our own State, for local purposes, and may aid in