

bill was actually introduced by Mr. Bingham, of Ohio, for this purpose, which, after being referred to a committee, was reported on February 25¹⁰ and appropriated ten million dollars to carry the plan into effect. Mr. Crisfield objected, and for this and minor reasons the bill finally passed out of sight and was not brought forward again.¹¹

But the question was not thus summarily hushed in Maryland. Emancipation now came to the fore, and remained there till the battle was fought to a finish.

“In this emergency the duty of prompt action became imperative, and even the advocates of gradual emancipation upon the President’s recommendation found themselves powerless in the midst of the claims of a higher *state necessity*, which demanded the prompt abatement of the evil. . . . While compensation was beyond the ability of the state, the duty was not the less incumbent to abate a nuisance which obstructed all the avenues of agricultural, manufacturing and commercial development.”¹²

The more radical wing of the Union party¹³ took up the question, and the fall election of 1863 was fought on this line. The *American*, in an editorial in the issue of October 7, 1863, said: “As we predicted at the outset, the question has forced its way, has compelled attention, until at last it is the one thing dwelt upon by the first intellects in the state, by all who are candidates for place and position at the hands of the people.”

As slavery was recognized and protected by the existing state Constitution (adopted in 1851) which said: “The Legislature shall not pass any law abolishing the relation of master or slave, as it now exists in this state” (Art. III, Sec. 43), a constitutional amendment was necessary to emancipation.

¹⁰ House Journal, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, 485.

¹¹ Nicolay and Hay, viii, pp. 456-7.

¹² Gov. Swann’s inaugural address, Jan. 11, 1865.

¹³ Not known in Maryland as the Republican party during the war.