

## REPORT.

ANNAPOLIS, February 2, 1864.

The undersigned, a majority of the committee on Colored Population, have had under consideration the subject matter, submitted under an order of the House, and they beg leave to report that they have examined the sections of the sixty-sixth article of the Code of Public General Laws, in relation to "Negroes." They are of the opinion that the repeal of the forty-fourth section of said article, would only serve to damage the material interests of Maryland, and operate to the injury of that portion of our population soon to be put forward on a course of improvement by changes in our Organic Law.

The geographical position of Maryland, a sort of gateway as it were, for all going and coming, North and South, forbids at this time the idea of making its territory an asylum for every grade of the negro race, free, slave and contraband, suddenly thrown on their own resources. We have over eighty thousand free negroes throughout the different counties, and these afford sufficient scope for our Legislation without additional incubus.

The undersigned believe that a true and healthy public sentiment tends towards the gradual employment of white labor in every department, and when slavery is waning and disappearing, it is the bounden duty of the General Assembly not to throw stumbling blocks in the way of white labor. To repeal the forty-fourth section of article sixty-six, at this time would cause such an influx of negroes as would come nigh Africanizing the State; for the Army of the Potomac as a necessary consequence of its progress, throws its thousands on contiguous territory. The policy of Maryland in discouraging immigration is in accordance with the well known action of Illinois, Indiana and other Western and North Western States. Temporary expedients for the purpose of meeting real or imaginary wants in regard to labor, are unbecoming in Legislators, and more so when the whole subject of our negro population in all its details is so soon to