

to the legislature of Maryland, during last winter, by the Hon. Mr. Blair, postmaster general of the United States. I believe he was sincere in the propositions which he submitted. He had been invited to address the legislature of the State, in company with some other distinguished gentlemen of the State; he, however, being the most prominent orator on the occasion. The object of his speech seemed to be mainly to impress upon the legislature of the State the necessity for the call of a convention for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the State. That was the burden of his speech, that it was necessary for the purpose of preserving, strengthening and perpetuating the Union sentiment, or what he conceived to be the Union sentiment in the State. And he urged it by all the reasons he could assign in favor of it, which I must confess, I failed to appreciate as being strong or potent. I do not know whether they were sufficiently convincing to the members of the legislature to induce them to pass an act to call the convention or not. I think it very likely that was predetermined upon. But in that speech, it will be remembered, my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Clarke) I expect will recall it, he reviewed the pledge given by the President of the United States to the State of Maryland, or promised to use his influence in favor of compensating the owners of slave property in the State. He, Mr. Blair, from that stand renewed the pledge which had been given by the President of the United States, and he spoke as if by authority, and yet, here are the adherents of Mr. Lincoln, who look upon him as the great man of the country, none equal to him, and none perhaps ever have been or ever will be his equal in their estimation—they are here repudiating the very sentiments which he sought, through his cabinet minister, to inculcate and impress upon the people of the State of Maryland. And I have no doubt they had their effect upon many of them, and that many were influenced to favor emancipation by the hope that they would realize some compensation. He took the ground also that it was necessary for the preservation of the Union, and he appealed, whether earnestly or not I will not say, but with apparent earnestness to the Union sentiment of the legislature to take such measures as would lead to the consummation of that great object—the abolition of slavery in the State of Maryland.

So that you see the friends of the administration helping to kill slavery. It did not die in the house of its friends, as suggested by the gentleman from Howard (Mr. Sands,) nor do I believe it ever received a blow from its own friends. The first fell blow it received was from abolition New England. If there had never been any abolition, there never would have been any rebellion. And it may be said if there was no slavery there would

have been no abolition. That is true. But slavery was established by the fathers of our government; it was recognized under the Constitution of the United States. They were willing even to prolong the period of the slave trade, so as to increase the number of slaves; and it was extended to the year 1808, instead of the year 1800, and from that day to the present slavery has been recognized in every deliberative and legislative body, and by every practical statesman in the land. It is only of late that we have had this great new light sprung upon us. I am either impervious to the rays of such brilliant luminaries as have attempted to illuminate this body with their new ideas, or the rays have not been so forcible as it was expected they would be. I have been unable to appreciate any force in any argument that has been used upon this floor in favor of the emancipation of slaves in the State of Maryland at the present time, on any ground whatever, either that it would favor the re-establishment of the Union, or the perpetuation of the Union, or the interests of the State, or the interests of the United States in any way whatever.

I hope, then, that the convention will again adopt the section which was reconsidered by the vote just taken, and that they will afford us that little opportunity to perpetuate the evidence of our rights upon which to base our claim for compensation hereafter.

As for compensation to those who have suffered losses by the public enemy in any way, by invasion, by robbery, by purloining in any way, they have a claim for it. I admit their claim. But I contend that the slaveowners of the State have a greater claim than they can possibly set up, because if they are deprived of their property, it will be by the people of the State and the general government. Indeed we have already to a great extent been deprived of it by the action of agents of the general government, and for losses sustained in that manner we already have claims against the general government.

I trust that this little section, which I have characterized as a small crumb of comfort, may be retained, that it will not be voted down, but that we may have an opportunity to register the property contemplated by the provisions proposed in this section.

Mr. NEGLEY. I cannot see the difference of which the gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Dent) speaks in regard to the obligations and duties of the government. If his theory be true, then the State of Maryland is under obligations not to protect a single solitary individual of its citizens. If his theory be true, then we have never to look for the protection of our property in any case by the State of Maryland. He entirely ignores the reciprocal duties of protection and allegiance, so far as the State of Maryland and its citizens are concerned.