

1 In connection with amendm ent 20, the Chair
2 suggested yesterday afternoon the possibility that the
3 13th amendment might be effective to prevent imprisonment
4 for debt. At my request, one of the research assistants
5 attached to the staff of the Convention has looked into
6 this since the Convention adjourned last evening, and
7 advises me that this may be questionable except in the area
8 of debts arising out of personal service contracts.

9 The Supreme Court of the United States has held
10 that imprisonment for debt arising out of a contract for
11 personal services is, in effect, an enforcement of
12 involuntary servitude, and would be a violation of the
13 Thirteenth Amendment of the United States. The Supreme
14 Court of the United States has apparently not passed at all
15 on the question of whether imprisonment for contract debts
16 would be a violation of the Thirteenth Amendment, but the
17 Supreme Courts of at least a few States upheld statutes
18 providing for imprisonment of absconding debtors in
19 contract cases, the most recent apparently being a decision
20 of the Supreme Court of Vermont in 1950.

21 This being the situation, I do not think the