

of 1798, drafted by Jefferson, except the words "and being void can derive no validity from mere judicial interpretation," which were doubtless inserted to meet the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the Dred Scott case.

Your committee submit whether in view of the forgoing, and other well known historical reminiscencies, there is not some reasonable ground for believing that the seceding States were honest and sincere in their convictions, although they led them to such disastrous results. At least, it is but just to "let facts be submitted to a candid world."

The 4th section of the proposed amendment declares that the validity of the public debt of the United States authorized by law shall not be questioned.

Your Committee are not aware of any necessity for this declaration. The authority of the Government of the United States to create the debt, and the purpose of the Government and people to keep their faith inviolate, cannot be questioned. The public debt cannot be made more secure by Congressional declarations, or Constitutional amendment. In truth, your Committee are of opinion that the agitation of such a question is calculated rather to create apprehensions than to prevent or allay them. The best security in the world for the public debt is the spirit of justice pervading the administration of affairs in all the departments of the Government; a strict regard to the limitations of the Constitution; a due regard to economy in the expenditures of the Government; and a scrupulous performance of every engagement and fulfillment of every pledge. A government, to command public confidence, must win the affections of all of its citizens by just conciliation and by a generous forbearance.

Your Committee regret to see coupled with the declaration relating to the validity of the public debt a proposal, by Constitutional amendment, to declare that neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave, but that all such claims shall be held illegal and void.

Your Committee have already reported resolutions reciting the acts and pledges of the Government upon the subject of slaves taken into the service of the United States or emancipated for the benefit of the Government, during the civil war, and asserting the claim of this State, on behalf of her citizens, upon the Government of the United States, for compensation. Of course this Legislature could not be expected to ratify a Constitutional amendment repudiating that claim.

And it is respectfully submitted whether a formal proposition, by Constitutional amendment to repudiate the faith of the Government, pledged to a portion of its citizens, is calculated to inspire confidence and a sense of security, in