

Report of the
Committee.

order to get rid of the Constitutional obligations and to aid the government and weaken the other party to the war, the Government determined to abolish slavery. It was admitted at the time that this could only be done legally and effectually, by an amendment of the Constitution, upon the surrender of their armies, the people of each State accepted the proposition of the President and Commander-in-Chief, as the basis of organizing their State Government in accordance with the results of the war; and in order to the performance of their Federal obligations, the State Governments were established by the people in each State, and these Governments, and the Constitution and laws of the United States, were recognized in every way by the people of each State as obligatory upon every person within their limits. The State Legislatures, under their Constitutions, ratified the Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery.—The Executive Department so proclaimed, and Congress acquiesced, and the amendment thus became a part of the Constitution of the United States, each State duly elected its Senators and Representatives to Congress, the compliance with which Federal obligations by any of the iusurgent States by the first of January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three. Mr. Lincoln by his proclamation of September, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, had declared, should, in the absence of strong counter-vailing proof, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, were no longer in rebellion, upon the assembling of Congress in December, eighteen hundred and sixty-five, those Senators and Representatives presented their credentials, and were ready to take their seats, but were refused admission, this refusal was not based on any objections to the elections, returns and qualifications of the Southern Senators and Representatives, of which, by the Constitution, each House shall be the Judge, but the two Houses appointed a joint Committee on Reconstruction, charged to inquire into the condition of the States which had formed the so-called Confederate States of America, and to report whether they or any of them, are entitled to be represented in either House of Congress. On the thirtieth of April, eighteen hundred and sixty-six, the Committee re-