

"full, fair and free investigation," interposed by the respondents by public officials who have refused or delayed to produce documentary evidence, or copies thereof, and more especially by the majority of this Committee, who have not only directly and entirely excluded the most important and conclusive evidence, viz., the books of registration, lists of qualified voters, ballots, poll books and election returns, but have also rendered unavailable for all practicable purposes of general information, by refusing to permit it, the evidence returned by the several Commissioners, and which is supposed to have been read and considered by the members of this House, entitled to vote on this question.

Until this evidence is actually read and weighed, no one will contend that any proper consideration can be given to the subject. That it has not, and could not, have been read by the members generally, whatever may have been accomplished by extraordinary efforts on the part of individual members of the Committee, is manifest from the fact that from the hour of its return to the Speaker, the evidence in this case has "slept the sleep that knows no waking, in the darkest corner of the Committee Room," and wrapped in the thousands of manuscript folios, in which it was originally returned.

Now, as it unfortunately so happens, that this Committee and House, by very large majorities, hold the same political faith as the respondents; if this contest be decided in favor of the respondents, will not an unprejudiced public refer the decision to partizanship, rather than to an honest desire to give the citizens of Baltimore their true representation? It is a well known rule of law, as well as common sense, that the suppression of evidence is taken strongly against the party guilty of it, for law and common sense both teach that upon the trial of any issue favorable facts will never be concealed.

Let us turn to the record and see how stands this matter. At the very threshold of the Session, the contestants, by their memorials presented to this House, asked this Committee to sit in the City of Baltimore, and there take evidence which, from its character, (being the election and registration records above referred to,) was manifestly unattainable in any other way.

This fair and reasonable request was again preferred to the House on the 18th day of Jan. last, by an order directing the Committee to send for persons and papers, employ a stenographer and take testimony in the City of Baltimore, and was refused, on the ground that the Committee had not asked for such powers as was its province to do. On the 26th of