

I invite, therefore, your united action in pressing this claim upon the attention of the National Government, in such manner as may be most likely to commend it to its favor.

THE REGISTRY LAW AND ELECTIONS.

The abuse of the elective franchise has been a subject of frequent complaint, and is one in which every citizen very justly feels a lively interest—the polls upon election day are by no means the proper place, nor is that the proper time to adjudicate upon the rights of voters, and the scenes there witnessed must have frequently suggested the importance of having all questions connected with such rights dispassionately disposed of elsewhere. The present Constitution of the State having very materially restricted the elective franchise by denying that right to those who have been in armed hostility to the national authority, or aided or countenanced in the manner therein indicated, those participating in the rebellion the number and importance of the questions upon which the right of voting depends, are consequently much enlarged, and the necessity is therefore more urgent than ever, that some other time and tribunal than the day and the judges of election should be provided to determine them. Besides the obvious necessity for such a provision growing out of the considerations I have stated, the Constitution in the second section of its first article has expressly enjoined this duty upon you, and has repeated that injunction in the forty-first section of its third article, in which it also expressly directs that you shall effectuate the provision to which I have just adverted, excluding from the right to vote those who have taken part in or aided the rebellion. In providing a system of registration as thus required, both by the necessity of the case and the commands of the Constitution, it will be important that you secure as far as practicable a uniformity in the system, as also in the course of proceeding on the part of those by whom the registration is to be made.

In connection with the subject of elections, I would call your attention to the returns thereof required to be made by the judges. A great diversity of practice exists in their course of proceeding; in some instances the returns are addressed to the Executive, in others to the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and by him certified, and in some cases, as in that of the election of States' Attorneys in some of the counties, no returns whatever have been transmitted to this department. These irregularities have probably arisen from some ambiguity in the terms of the Constitution and Code on the subject; the returns for instance of the election of a State's Attorney, although it has been customary to commission that officer, are required to be made to the court having criminal jurisdiction