

Societies intended to be introduced in that part of the Message referred to your Committee. The existence of Secret political Conventions in various of other States, has for some time occupied a large share of public attention & has become a matter of great public interest. But such an idea & decided conviction of their dangerous tendencies, fill it my imperative duty, as the Executive of the State, to bring to the notice of the Legislature & through that body, to the people of the State the opinions entertained by me on the policy of encouraging a secret association for political purposes so far as it may be consistent with the Common Good.

I thought the language employed for the purpose free from all ambiguity; it was certainly intended so to be & I was as much surprised at finding myself misunderstood as I was at learning that the fact of the existence of such Societies was any longer a matter of doubt or uncertainty. I hope however, that in this communication I may be more fortunate & that your Committee may be at no loss to discover to what political Societies I referred, or the purposes, for which it is alleged they were instituted.

I intended in the part of the Message referred to your Committee respectfully to call the attention of the representatives of the people to the fact of the existence of many of all secret political Societies or Conventions; and to express the opinion that in my judgment, such associations of themselves are calculated to produce great evil & are inconsistent with & injurious to the regular action of Republican Institutions; & that when the purpose of such Societies is to reduce a large portion of the people to the condition of a slavish subjection to their secret edicts & decrees and to exclude from all honorable employment the Catholic & the Naturalized Citizen, & leave a Catholic & Naturalized Citizen, they become dangerous in the extreme & should awaken the deep solicitude of every true American in the State.

I am credibly informed by a large number of Citizens, that in their opinion & belief, there exists now within this State, numerous Societies of a Secret Character, whose object & purpose is to prevent the election or appointment to office of any person belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, or who is not a Native born Citizen of the United States; and that in such secret associations, Councils or Lodges, oaths, pledges & obligations are administered in effect to the object.

The existence of such unlawful combinations throughout the State has been repeatedly charged in the Congress of the United States, in the Legislatures of one or more of the States & by a large portion of the press & people in every section of the Country. The fact is more abundantly evidenced by disclosures made in the Legislature of a State State, & by many members of the "Order", who, having been wrongfully & innocently drawn into it, & finding that they were deceived as to its purposes, have renounced the suggestions of Conscience in assuming the oaths & obligations (themselves illegally administered).

With you Gentlemen aside, under the sanction of