

Agent or Officer of the same.

should you require as I trust they may
 in satisfying the public mind, that there are no such secret political
 combinations, or that no oaths, obligations, or pledges are administered
 in such Councils, to the prejudice to any class of American Citizens, &
 that there are not such any design or purpose in such Councils to
 "trouble, molest or discourage," or to exclude from participation, or to
 any citizen on consequence of the colour or complexion, or the place of
 his birth. No one will be more pleased than myself & more more
 ready to acknowledge that injustice has been done to a large class
 of the people of the country. The facts advanced before the Committee
 shall convince, it is wished that Secret political Councils have been
 organized among us for the purpose & designs attributed to them, I
 should conceive that there can be little or no diversity of opinion
 as to the tendency to subvert "the well established & dearly
 cherished principles of our Government." The Constitution degrades
 no man, either on account of his place of birth, or his religious
 opinions, but equally covers every Citizen of the State, as American
 soil, or otherwise born, with its protecting shield. And if it shall
 be made to appear that in such of these political Councils as
 may be shown to exist, oaths or pledges are administered for the
 purpose of qualifying or obtaining the exercise of the right of
 suffrage, in an unlawful manner, or unwarranted by the
 Constitution, it will be for you & for your Government, to determine
 how far such obligations shall be allowed to conflict with the
 Constitutional obligations of the Citizen to the State & to apply
 the remedy which such a condition of things may require.

It might be well to consider, that while this matter
 is undergoing investigation, whether the existence of such a secret
 order should not have led in some instances to pre-determined obstruction
 of the polls, resulting in violence & disorder & the exclusion of the legal
 votes of orderly & well disposed Citizens; for it is one of the most
 imperative duties of the State to throw around elections of every class,
 whether Native or adopted, any possible means of protection against
 any & all combinations secret or open, that would hinder or
 obstruct them, on the exercise of their right of voting, & thus im-
 pede the free course of the only legitimate means of obtaining your
 expression of the public mind. A wilful & deliberate obstruction
 of the polls is a crime against the State, much in view of its con-
 sequences, assumes a degree of enormity to which it is difficult to
 assign a limit, & the Legislature can scarcely be too rigid in the
 infliction of punishment upon those who may be found guilty
 of such an offence against the dignity of the State & the right of the
 individual Citizen. It should at least be declared a felony and
 punished accordingly. I hope, whatever may be the result of
 your present investigation, that you commend such action to the favour-
 able notice of the Legislature, in order that henceforth any hindrance
 or obstruction whatsoever with intent to prevent a voter from depo-
 siting his ballot shall be punished with due severity.

I have thus said in the midst of unusual and
 constant interruptions, (not wishing to detain you from the work
 before you by any delay on my part) hastily thrown together these