

You also inform me that, Mississippi desires the Co operation of her Sister States of the South, in measures necessary to defend our rights, and to this end, you desire to know whether I will convoke the Legislature of Maryland, for the purpose of counselling with the constituted authorities of the State of Mississippi, and at what time it may be expected our General Assembly will be called for that purpose.

In the conversation I had with you, this morning, you were good enough to explain more fully the views and intentions of Mississippi in this matter — her desire that our Legislature should also appoint Commissioners to meet those of other Southern States; and that action at once be had by all the Southern States for the formation of a new government among ourselves.

The position of Maryland as a small Southern Border State, renders the exercise of any power I may possess, for the purposes indicated by you, a matter of very great importance.

Our State is unquestionably identified with the Southern States, in feeling and by the institutions and habits which prevail among us. But she is also conservative, and above all things devoted to the Union of these States under the Constitution. Her people will use all honorable means to preserve and perpetuate these. I think I know the sentiments of her citizens in this matter, and that I am not mistaken when I say that, almost unanimously, they intend to uphold that Union and to maintain their rights under it — that they believe these last will yet be admitted and secured, and that not until it is certain they will be respected no longer — not until every honorable, constitutional and lawful effort to secure them is exhausted — will they consent to any effort for its dissolution.

The people of Maryland are anxious that time be given and an opportunity afforded for a fair and honorable adjustment of the difficulties and grievances of which they more than the people of any other Southern State, have a right to complain, and, in my opinion, if the people of this Union really desire its continuance and perpetuity, such adjustment may be effected, I hope and believe it will be effected — and promptly. And until the effort is found to be in vain I cannot consent, by any precipitate or revolutionary action, to aid in the dismemberment of this Union.

When I shall see clearly that there is no hope of such adjustments, and am convinced that the power of the Federal Government is to be perverted to the destruction, instead of being used for the protection, of our rights — then, and not till then, can I consent so to exercise any power with which I am invested as to afford even the opportunity for such a proceeding.

Whatever powers I may have I shall use only after full consultation, and in fraternal concert with the other