

An attempt of this character to force upon a people by means of military duress, the adoption of a particular policy, even in ordinary times and on far less sensitive subjects, would be a hazardous experiment with the temper of any Community; but in times like the present, with our hearts intent on the preservation of the Union, and our united energies required to secure it, the seizure or seduction of all the slaves of the State capable of military service — whilst it would not probably, under any circumstances, add a single regiment to the ranks of the army — would awaken a sense of wrong, and a feeling of indignation and disgust, that, in their moral effect upon the loyal feeling of the State, would far outweigh all the advantage that fifty such Regiments could bring to the support of any cause.

I refer to its influence not only upon the slave owner, but upon our whole population. The influence of such a proceeding results not more from the actual loss sustained than from the unlawful attempt to inflict it, revolting to our sense of justice and that deep-rooted respect for the rights of property habitual with the most of us, whether we happen to possess or not any of the particular kind invaded.

I cannot believe that the President, with the clear and straightforward views he usually takes of these subjects, will ever sanction such a proceeding, hearken to the counsels of the Judge's letter, or hesitate to repudiate a policy intrinsically so unjust, and that I cannot forbear saying would be so ungrateful towards such a State as Maryland — When we remember what she has already endured, what she has already done, how ardent has been her loyalty, how unwavering, and at the same time, how important her support of the Government, and that this proceeding, if adopted, would make her an invidious exception to every other loyal Community, I think I may venture to hope that not only will the President reject this odious project, but that he will take an early occasion emphatically to disavow it, and arrest the proceedings of these recruiting officers now claiming to act by his authority.

I have thus somewhat more at length than in my personal interview with you, hastily sketched my views on some of the matters of greatest importance to our State. I have reason to hope that they do not substantially differ from your own. I shall be happy to think they will have the aid of your own valuable influence in promoting the object we both have in view of restoring harmony among the Union men of Maryland, disabusing the minds of the Administration in regard to their position and purposes, and securing to our State the consideration to which she is entitled, and to the Government the cordial support of her citizens — certainly of sufficient importance to warrant a due regard to their undoubted wishes.

Yours very truly
A. W. Bradford