

adopted as, may readily enable all who have not forfeited their right to Government protection to be fairly and fully compensated, in accordance with the acknowledged principles of public law, but, more especially still, that our State shall not be made the exclusive subject of their operation — Whilst it is true that our own loss might not be actually lightened by applying the same doctrine to every other in our condition, still such an application would relieve the proceeding of one of its most odious features, and rebut the inference to which it might be otherwise obnoxious — that some question of mere local policy had mingled with the motives with which it has been suggested —

There is nothing in the history of this State during the progress of this Rebellion, which warrants the limitation of such a proceeding to her people — Without particularly dwelling upon her course of action, it may be safely affirmed that she has done no act which has ever compromised her loyalty or impaired her just claims to the confidence of the Country — If her property, whether in slaves or anything else, is really needed to put down the Rebellion, there is not a State in the Union that will yield it more cheerfully; but as your Excellency can well understand, she will not see her Property of any kind wrested from her by armed force with no emergent Military Necessity for it first proclaimed, with no adequate indemnity for it secured, with no similar process elsewhere instituted and not even an official order ever promulgated commanding a resort to it here or prescribing the manner of its execution; without at least making known her earnest protest against the proceeding —

It is not improbable that your Excellency may have been informed that these proceedings are not so offensive to the general sentiment of our people as I represent them. To this I can only say that in my opinion no policy adopted by the Government since the commencement of this Rebellion has ever awakened such unequivocal opposition. With every desire on the part of our loyal population to sustain the Government in its war upon the Insurgents, no Convention and no primary meeting of any party or of any fragment of a party has to my knowledge yet ventured to express their approval of it. I am aware that a few have apparently calculated upon conciliating a support for it upon the ground that every slave enlisted will lighten the burthen of the Draft and reduce the individual liability to Conscription; but those who reason from such purely selfish premises do violence to that cardinal sense of justice prevailing in every well ordered community. If a tax of any given amount were imposed upon the State, to be raised from the property of its citizens for the use of the Government, we might as well expect to see them justify the forcible and despotic seizure and appropriation of the funds of a selected few to make up the required amount, because it would diminish their own just share thereof, as to expect them to approve an arbitrary movement against the persons or property of their neighbors, because it might result in the exemption of their own.

But whilst I can not avoid allusion to such assumed influences, suggested as they are at times in the current discussions of the subject, I would by no means be understood as imputing such calculations to your Excellency; I believe that in commanding or repudiating these proceedings, you will be governed only by the consideration of what the exigencies of the Country imperatively require;