

Fifthly, "To use their endeavors to obtain, if possible, a statement or description of the principles, objects and purposes of such societies, and report the same to this House, with such measures as they might deem necessary for restraining such societies from violating the letter and spirit either of the Federal Constitution or the Constitution of this State?"

And they were further authorized respectfully to request the Governor to communicate to them any information he might possess in regard to such societies, alluded to in his message, and the nature of the secrets they preserve. Never for a moment supposing there could possibly arise any misapprehension or misconception as to their powers and duties, which appeared to them to be so clearly and distinctly pointed out, they did not fail to use all proper means, reasonably within their power, to obtain such information as appeared calculated to throw light upon the several subjects of their inquiry, and to possess themselves of the names of such persons as were believed to be capable and willing to give testimony material and important to the investigations with which the committee was charged. Nor did they find it necessary to use any very active exertions to obtain information of this character to an almost indefinite extent; for such seemed to have been the gratification with which the public received the announcement that this investigation had been ordered by the House of Delegates, that information in printed and written forms, and lists of the names of witnesses who could and were willing to testify on oath before the Committee, (if *summoned* and brought up by *authority*,) came pouring in upon them from all quarters, in many instances without solicitation and to much greater extent than they thought necessary or ever proposed to call for or use. Neither did they fail to urge upon the Committee, as soon and as frequently as proper deference and respect for the majority would allow, the propriety, and, as they conceived, the necessity of early action and prompt attention to the duties assigned them.

The undersigned felt this necessity the more sensibly when they reflected that this investigation had been moved on the part of the majority of the House, and resolved upon by them without opposition from any quarter, with so much apparently enthusiastic zeal and perfect unanimity, and consequently, that any failure to accomplish the work in a satisfactory manner, from whatever cause, would be a severe disappointment, as well to their fellow-members, who had or-