crease of this population, neither citizens nor slaves, have been generally felt and almost universally admitted.

No one doubts that it is through their agency in the main that the slaves are induced to run away—that the example which many of them set of thriftless laziness, sustained only by dishonest practices, is corrupting to the slaves and to many of their own class—that they encourage slaves to insubordination. The avoidance of the moderate labor required of them, to habits of theft and to dissatisfaction with their condition, all this which was apparent in 1831 is only more palpable now. The committee forbear to speculate upon all the consequences which may hereafter flow from the increase among the people of Maryland of the free black population, an inferior race whose proper condition when mixed with the superior white race few will deny to be that of servitude, or at least of well regulated subordination. The committee without hesitation recommend that the Legislature be invoked to pass such laws as may be necessary to give efficiency to the policy of 1831, and to enforce the prompt removal from the State of all persons manumitted hereafter. A majority of the committee would prefer, however the passage of a law prohibiting all emancipation whatever in future.

It has been suggested, also, that the State should revert to its former policy in regard to manumission by last will and entirely prohibit all such unless when the will shall have been made by the testator so long previous to his death as to afford a probability that the manumission was the deliberate act of a person whose faculties were unimpaired by disease and not overcome by the near approach of death. It has also been suggested that prospective manumission should be entirely prohibited. That in future the acquisition of real estate by free negroes should be prohibited, and that no free negro residing in Maryland who goes out of the state should be allowed to return to it.

In regard to those negroes who have been manumitted since 1831, it would seem to be contrary to the policy of that act that they should acquire real estate, since the enjoyment of it is incompatible with the policy which forbids such a person remaining in the State in a condition of freedom. Such was the opinion of Charles Johnson, expressed in the 1st vol. of his reports, page 357.

But it is supposed that the possession of real estate by these people is not only inconsistent with the policy which looks to their removal from the State, but is also productive of evil in other respects.

It not unfrequently happens that these people obtain small parcels of land, where they form a close settlement, cultivating much less than is necessary to yield them a support, and laboring very little for such persons as would be glad to hire them on liberal terms. The conclusion is that they eke out their support by unlawful means, and that the evil would be prevented by depriving them of the power to hold real estate. On the subject of free negroes going out of the State and returning to it, the Legislature has heretofore acted by the general laws of 1831, which, however, allows an absence of thirty days, by other general acts and by the special local law applicable to the three Counties of Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's.

The first is believed to be imperative and wholly inefficient—the latter is stringent and has recently been enforced. The committee have not time to digest these and other subjects brought to their notice thoroughly; but they think that the attention of the Legislature may well be invited to them, and such legislation in regard to them be asked for, as, upon careful consideration, the wisdom of the General Assembly may think will enhance the public interests.

The laws in relation to our colored population are scattered through many volumes, running through a hundred and fifty years. It has been proposed to ask the Legislature to re-enact them in one body. The object is a good one, and is likely to be accomplished without further legislative action. The codifiers now preparing their work have already completed a chapter, which groups all these statutes. Should that work be accepted by the Legislature, all that is necessary will have been done.

The committee do not think it advisable to prepare at this time detailed bills or propositions to be submitted to the Legislature. The most that can be done, they think, is to indicate the subjects on which legislation is desired, and the general purpose of such legislation; to appoint a committee to present the views of the Convention to the Legislature and to assist in preparing such bills as may be necessary, leaving, however, to the wisdom and discretion of the Legislature to determine the measure and mode of relief on the various subjects to which the action of this Convention has referred.

They recommend to the Convention the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved,* That this Convention consider any measure for the general removal of the free blacks from the State of Maryland as impolitic, inexpedient, and uncalled for by any public exigency which could justify it.

2. *Resolved,* That the free negro population should be well and thoroughly controlled by efficient laws, to the end that it may be orderly, industrious and productive.

3. *Resolved,* That for the purpose of diminishing as far as possible the evils which proceed from an excessive and increasing free negro class, the policy of the State, declared in 1831, should be re-affirmed, and such amendments be made to the act of that year as will give to it active force and certain operation, and as will either prohibit emancipation altogether or compel the prompt removal from the State of those emancipated; and that the Legislature should be asked to review and amend the laws relating to free negroes and to emancipation, so as to remedy all the defects of a system which time and experience have disclosed.

4. *Resolved,* That a committee of —— be appointed to submit the views of this Convention, and to ask appropriate legislation by the General Assembly.

After which, C. W. Jacobs, Esq., of Worcester, submitted a report, signed by himself, with the following resolutions:

Whereas, The State of Maryland, for a long succession of years, has been augmenting her free negro population till their numbers have attained to 90,000, who are positively injurious to the best interests of this State, therefore

Be it Resolved, That the Legislature of this State, at its next session, be requested by this Convention to terminate free negroism in Maryland at an early day, and on the most advantageous terms to our white population.

Resolved, That no slaveholder owning a limited number of slaves shall be eligible to become the owner of any such conscript slaves, and that no person not now an owner of any slave shall become the owner of more than a limited number of such conscript slaves; and that the price of said conscript slaves be made so low, and the payments thereof in such instalments, as to enable our citizens of limited means to become the owners of such slaves.

Resolved, That a law ought to be passed to exempt from execution one or more slaves belonging to any one person.

Resolved, That if freedom is really worth anything to our free negroes,

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

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