

RESOLUTIONS

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF MICHIGAN

RESPECTING SLAVERY.

FEBRUARY 5, 1855.—Read, ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

JOINT RESOLUTION respecting slavery in the Territories of the United States.

WHEREAS slavery is regarded, by the people of this State, as a great moral, social, and political evil, at war with the principles of the declaration of independence and the great object contemplated by our forefathers in establishing the Constitution of the United States, an impediment to the prosperity of our common country, and an element of domestic weakness and discord; and

Whereas the people of Michigan owe it to the early and prudent exercise of the power of Congress over the Territories of the United States, in applying the anti-slavery restriction contained in the ordinance of 1787, that she is not now a slaveholding State; and

Whereas the people have heretofore, through their legislature, repeatedly and earnestly remonstrated against the further extension of slavery in the national Territories; and

Whereas our present senators and two of our representatives in Congress did, at the session thereof now last past, vote for the repeal of the Missouri compromise, so called, and for the passage of an act organizing the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, thereby permitting slavery to be introduced into a region equal in extent to the thirteen original States, from which Territory, by the solemn legislative compact of 1820, it was forever excluded; and

Whereas such repeal has been effected without petition, without discussion by the people, and in defiance of the well known wishes and opinions of a large majority of the people of this State and of the United States; and

Whereas the violation, by Congress, of the compact of 1820 has released the people of this State from all obligation to respect Congressional compromises for the extension or perpetuation of slavery; therefore

Resolved, by the senate and house of representatives of the State of Michigan, That we hold the said repeal, and the permission granted by said Territorial act to introduce slavery into said Territories, to be a violation of a mutual covenant between the free States and the slaveholding

States of the Union, justified by no necessity, present or prospective; injurious to the rights of the former, tending to interrupt the internal harmony of the country, and to frustrate the well known purpose of the framers of the Constitution, who, by gradual legislation, designed ultimately to put an end to slavery,

Resolved, That we are opposed to the further extension of slavery, or the recognition or permission thereof, in any Territory now owned, or which may hereafter be acquired by the United States.

Resolved, That we hold it to be within the constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade in all the Territories of the United States, including the District of Columbia, and that it is their duty, in view of the great and permanent interests of the nation, to pass laws for its immediate suppression and extinction in all such Territories and in said District.

Resolved, That our senators in Congress be, and they are hereby, instructed, and our representatives requested, to vote for and use their best exertions to procure the passage of an act of Congress that shall prohibit the introduction or existence of slavery in any of the Territories of the United States, and especially in Kansas and Nebraska, and to introduce, without delay, a bill for this latter purpose.

Resolved, That the act of Congress of 1850, known as the Fugitive Slave law, was, in the opinion of the people of this State, an unnecessary measure; that it contains provisions of doubtful constitutionality; that the mode of proceeding under it is harsh, unjust, and repugnant to the moral sense of the people of the free States, cruel and despotic towards the person claimed as a fugitive, and that we are in favor of its immediate repeal; therefore

Resolved, That our senators in Congress be, and they are hereby, instructed, and our representatives requested, to use their best exertions to procure the immediate repeal of the act of 1850, known as the Fugitive Slave law.

Resolved, That the governor be requested to forward copies of the foregoing preamble and resolutions to our senators and representatives in Congress.

GEO. A. COE,

President of the Senate.

C. LOVELL,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Approved January 26, 1855.

KINSLEY S. BINGHAM.

A true copy:

ROD. R. GIBSON,

Deputy Secretary of State.

[L. s.]