

held them as slaves; in a political point of view, what is that but continuing the existence of slavery for ten or more years?

What are the provisions of the law as it stands at present, in relation to the apprenticing of colored persons? The orphans' court has the power to bind out the children of any free colored person, if in the opinion of the court it will better their condition. They have the absolute discretion over the matter now. In my opinion it is an extreme power. It amounts to saying that even if the child is old enough to work for his own living, or the parents are able and willing to support him, still if in the judgment of the orphans' court it is better to put him somewhere else, under other control than that of his parents, they shall have the power to do so.

Now the effect of the proposition before us is to neutralize the proposition which we have incorporated in this organic law, and in which we have said that this class of involuntary servitude shall no longer exist in this State—to neutralize it by another provision in the same organic law, which cannot be removed except by a constitutional amendment. What do gentlemen mean by saying that there shall be no involuntary servitude in this State? If without the consent of either parents or children you apprentice a whole class of people by a broad general description, what is that but involuntary servitude? And what is the difference between that involuntary servitude and slavery? What was the reason for putting in the twenty-fourth article of the declaration of rights, the words "involuntary servitude" in addition to the word "slavery?" That article says "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude." What does that mean?

Now, while I will consent to leave the law as it stands upon the statute book, I cannot consent to adopt any such provision as this. What is the actual state of facts? I do not pretend to deny that if a master has been left by this emancipation clause in the possession of helpless children two or three years of age, and he undertakes to support them and rear them, I admit that there is some reason in their remaining with him and rendering service until they are twenty-one years of age. But that is not the scope of this proposition; it is not confined to that class; but embraces those who are just as able to take care of themselves as is anybody else. And what is to become of the parents? If the master does not choose to employ the parents, and you take away the children who are able to support the parents, then the parents must go upon the county, if they from any cause are unable to support themselves. If not that, then what does it amount to? You not only force the minor who is emancipated to remain in the custody of the same man who before held him as a slave, but you force the parents to stay there also. Because if they have no support

except from the child, then they must remain with the child; so that both parents and children will be put back into the same condition practically as before.

The whole scope and effect of this proposition is to keep from disturbing to some extent the foundations of that great deep which we have broken up. Now as I am opposed to anything that is reaction, as I am in favor of going straight forward in the work we have begun, I cannot support this proposition. With all due deference to the views of my friends here who support this measure, I honestly believe that if at this late day we put this into our constitution, it will be regarded as an evidence of a reactionary feeling in this convention. It will be considered as evidence that we have begun to quail before the work we have undertaken to accomplish; that as our State has been invaded, that as the threats of collision and demands for peace are resounding through the atmosphere, we, the representatives of the people of Maryland, in our halls of legislation, upon the soil of our native State, begin to hesitate about carrying out our great work. It will be so understood from one corner of the State to the other, by those men upon whom we must rely to carry this constitution. You can get no support by this or any other similar measure from the other classes. You must carry this constitution through upon the broad shoulders of those men who have looked the future in the face, and who are willing, under the providence of God, to abide by that future. And if they do not support it, then your constitution will go down with the weight attached to it, and which will sink it so deep that no band of resurrection can ever raise it again.

Now I hope to put this constitution before the people of Maryland, and invite and be able to obtain the support of all of our people who are prepared for the emergencies of the future. And I expect no other support than theirs. And if they are not able to carry through this constitution it will go down only to be raised by some other state of circumstances, which I fear, if this constitution is defeated, will never occur.

I have said about all I wish to say upon this subject. I have made these remarks without any disrespect to any gentleman who differs from me. I see and I appreciate the motives which have induced them, I think mistakenly, to support this measure. But I do submit that such will be the tendency and effect of it. This is its political effect. As my friend from Cecil (Mr. Pugh) has said, it is to give something to which the political managers upon the other side can cling for the purpose of maintaining their political organization; something which is to form the basis for this great reconstruction which we are told is to be accomplished. Now I want nothing to do with any such reconstruction. I am not afraid of revolution. I believe the