

STATE OF MAINE.

Senate, March 14, 1843

THE Committee on Bills in the Second Reading have
examined a *Resoln* entitled *Resoln in relation to the*
rights of certain citizens of this State

and Report the same *with out* amendment

E. R. Smith,
Recorder

IN SENATE, March 14 1843

Read and accepted.

Saml Haskell

Secretary.

State of Maine.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *March 16* 1843

The Committee on Bills in the third reading have examined a *Resolve* entitled *Resolves in relation*
to the rights of certain citizens of
this State

and Report, the same

Without

amendment.

Chas. A. Russell
Per Order

State of Maine.

Resolved in relation to the rights of certain citizens
of this State.

Resolved, That while we deplore all interference
with the social institutions ^{and} rights of other states,
and while we hold ourselves bound by the ~~strongest~~ ^{strongest}
possible obligation to comply with every requirement of the
constitution of the United States, and especially with
that of section 2d article 4th, we do hold the right
of every citizen, colored or not colored, to the protection
of that constitution in his person and his property
to be equally good.

Resolved, that we do most solemnly, in behalf
of the people of this State, protest against the existence
of any laws in any of the States or Territories of this Union
which subject our free ^{colored} citizens to the liability to be
arrested and imprisoned as ~~alleged slaves~~, and to be
sold into slavery for the payment of the costs of
such arrest and imprisonment. That we do
protest against such laws as unconstitutional,
and as endangering this Union.

Resolved that our Senators in Congress be instructed
and our Representatives requested to protest solemnly
against such laws and to use their best efforts to
procure the repeal of all such laws within the States
or Territorial governments if any such exist.

Resolved that a copy of the foregoing resolutions
be forwarded to each of our Senators and Representatives
in Congress, and to the Governor of each of our
States and Territories.

In Senate March 14. 1843
These resolves having had two several
readings were passed to be engrossed.
Sent down for concurrence.

Jeru A. Skill. Secretary.

House of Representatives, March 16. 1843. These resolves,
having had ~~three~~ ^{two} several readings were passed to be
engrossed in ~~the~~ concurrence.

Wm. T. Johnson Clerk

James

372

Chap. 65. 456 65

393

resolves in relation to
the rights of certain
citizens of this State,

March 15 - tomorrow

and

1843

envelope

13 10 - 11

To the Hon the Senate & House of Representatives,
in Legislature assembled,

The undersigned would respectfully represent that by the Constitution of the United States, Art. 4. Sect 2 it is provided that "the citizens of each state shall be entitled to all the privileges & immunities of citizens in the several states", and further by the 4th Article of the Amendments to the constitution, it is provided that the "right of the people to be secure in their persons against unreasonable seizure, shall not be violated". These provisions are a part of the fundamental law of the land, and no doubt were designed to throw the broad shield of the constitution over all our citizens, & to protect them in their personal rights throughout the whole length & breadth of our national domain. - Indeed the protection of personal liberty and the establishment of justice seems to have been the paramount object of the constitution. - Neither territorial, state or national laws, therefore can rightfully make invasion upon the unforfeited rights of the humblest citizen, and whenever & whenever such invasion is attempted it ought to be met with frankness, firmness & frankness - and every good citizen, as well as our State & National legislatures ought to make solemn protest against it. - And yet it is well known that in some of the states of this Union laws have been enacted by which a certain class of our ^{free} offending citizens of this or any other state, if they but enter those states in which such laws exist, may, without the commission of any crime, whatever, ~~be arrested~~, thrown into prison taxed with the costs of the arrest & with their own keeping while so wrongfully imprisoned, & in default of payment be sold into slavery for a longer or short or time, & even for life. - And note with stinging a similar law in South Carolina has been pronounced unconstitutional by Judge Johnson - sitting as a judge of the Supreme Court of the nation. - He being a citizen ~~also~~ of the same state - still we find that ~~the~~ ^{the} judicial opinions, and the liberty protecting spirit of our constitution, are alike powerless when any of the states of this Union choose to set them at defiance and for aught we know - some of the citizens of this state

whose votes at the last September election contributed
to give seats to some of the members of your honorable
body - may at this moment, under the operation
of these outrageous laws, without fault on their part
be working without wages, in a chain gang
or incarcerated in a prison awaiting the day when
they shall be put upon the auction block & be made
the merchandise of men - Your petitioners would
further represent that in one of the territories of these
United States, where no laws can exist without the
sanction of Congress - and when we as a nation are
responsible for such laws as exist therein because we
have the right and the power to repeal all such
~~laws~~ as we do not approve - a law is now in force
under the sanction of our American Congress
by virtue of which certain citizens of this state if they
shall enter upon our own national domain
may be arrested, thrown into prison & without fault
or crime sold into slavery for ninety nine years -
One would suppose that an American citizen
conducting himself with decency & propriety being
industrious and honest, would be safe in planting
himself ^{any} where under our own jurisdiction - but instead
of this he is treated like a felon - ~~and the constitution~~
~~of his country~~ - and an American Congress, as he
holds up his chains, and asks for that protection for
the security of which the constitution of his country was
ordained & points to the law under which he suffers &
asks for its repeal - deliberately turn away from his
his petition & his tears, and by their vote declare
that the protection of such citizens is no concern
of theirs, and were a portion of our northern represent-
atives are found on the side of the oppressor & unblash-
ingly record their votes, against the expediency of
even considering the repeal of this wicked & slave
making law - This it will be recalled is not a
case of state legislation where our Congress have
no right to interfere but it is rather the Government
itself breaking through all constitutional restraints
trampling upon the principles upon which it professes
to be based & turning kidnappers by reducing its own
offending citizens into chattels upon its own domain

Your petitioner has said nothing about the effect of these laws upon the commerce of the north because he feels that their effect upon personal liberty is sufficient to lead to the adoption of such measures as the importance & necessity of the case may demand

Your petitioner would therefore request this honorable Legislature to make solemn protest against all such laws as now exist in any of the States - declaring such laws to be unconstitutional & void - & tendering such pecuniary aid to any of the citizens of this State as may be necessary to secure their rights in a court of law - & also that they request our Senators & representatives in Congress to vote for the repeal of all such laws as have been, or may hereafter be passed by any territorial legislature when Congress has the power to interpose its repeal - and thereby save us from the reproach which such laws cast upon us as a people -

And as in duty bound will ever pray -

Seth Green

Petition of.

290

Little May -

relating to personal freedom

House of Representatives

Feb. 27. 1843

Referred to the Committee
having under consideration

the petition of John E.

Godfrey Rensselaer

Concurrence

W. T. Johnson

In Senate Feby. 28 1843

Referred in Concurrence

John Haskell
Secy.

Sam. Wood

In Senate March 10. 1843

The Committee to whom was referred
the petition of Seth May Ark. leave
respectfully to report the following
Resolves

John Hubbard
Chairman

Read and accepted
sent down for concurrence.

Sam Washell Secy.

House of Representatives, March 15. 1843. accepted in
Concurrence

Wm. S. Johnson Clerk

Committee
on
Education
March 15. 1843