

The Modification of the Test Oath.

The Judiciary committee of the House of Representatives yesterday presented a report on the message of the President of the United States, transmitting communications from the Secretary of the Interior, and the Postmaster General, respecting a modification of the oath of office passed by the act of Congress approved July 20, 1862.

Representative Rogers presented his views in which he says the honorable Secretary and President were in a situation to know the necessity of a modification of such oath than any other persons. Their honesty, loyalty and love of country cannot be justly questioned, and it is a high and worthy recommendation that they should not be treated as traitors.

These positions gave the conspirators a ready influence over the Southern States and supplied the means for organizing forces that converted one-half of the Republic into a battlefield where loyalty and treason contended for the mastery. If the policy of the government had proved true to its trust the rebellion could not have occurred.

They saw that treason derived all its original strength from the position of the leading traitors. The business of the traitors who had gone from Congress, from the cabinet, from the army and navy, to the rebellion, was fresh in the minds of all who participated in the enactment of the oath of office.

The committee understand that it is the deliberate purpose of Congress to maintain its policy as set forth in the act of July 2, 1862, to keep the offices of the government in the hands of loyal men. Treason is not to be made respectable by the robes of office, and places of honor, trust, power and profit are to be bestowed only on those who are true men as can be found in the insurrectionary States to fill all such places, and none other shall be selected.

The committee does not suppose that the President who has signed this declaration had any more right to dispense with the law than any other law. An officer should know that the dispensing power does not exist in this government, and that the law is to be dispensed with, but not tolerated.

Had this been done in the spring of 1865 the complications now existing in the affairs of the nation would in all probability have been avoided. If the President had adhered to the law, and no officers had been appointed who violated it, the rebellion would not have been so long.

Let the government recognize their claims in this regard, and loyalty and respect for the laws of the United States will be restored. It is to be expected that the Southern States which may be opposed to the views and feelings of those citizens who fought for four years to destroy the government, they must learn that obedience to law is a duty not to be lightly regarded, and that loyalty to the

government is a virtue which cannot be destroyed by the social power of the disloyal. When these ends are secured it may be expedient to modify the test oath, but not till then. The Committee, therefore, ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

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The act presenting the oath was passed when the nation was in the midst of a gigantic war waged against it by its own citizens, and Congress intended to establish by it a permanent rule of public policy, which should exclude from the offices of the United States every citizen who had voluntarily abandoned his allegiance to the government and joined in the mad attempt of traitors to destroy it.

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PHILADELPHIA, TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 1866.