

48 Beekman St.

New York, Nov. 28/55

Lysander Spooner Esq.

Boston-

Dear Sir,

Your plan for agitating the Constitutional question in Congress, is - in my judgment - an excellent one, and I shall do all I can, in the Committee, and as Editor, to assist in bringing it into efficient operation.

And in order to this, the circulation of your Constitutional Argument, and especially its supply to prominent members of Congress, will be a suitable measure. -The Executive Committee of our Society meets on Wednesday of next week, when, I hope, some definite action of the subject will be taken.

In your Letter to L Tappen[?] you mention several names of members of Congress who, you hope, will assist in forwarding the discussion. Perhaps some of them may. I shall be disappointed if some of them do not. But I shall be more disappointed if all of them do.

What I fear is that our "Free Soil" "Republicans" in general will be afraid that so "radical" an agitation will prejudice many minds and hazard their Anti-Nebraska and Kansas measures, in which they have so much confidence.

I think I know of one who will not be deterred by that policy. I refer to Hon Amos P. Granger[?] of Syracuse in this State, now on his way to Washington. I have just had a two hours' interview with him, and find him much interested in the subject. I handed him a Copy of your work - also the work of W Rogers and some other things of that sort, and am persuaded he will give them careful attention. He is a plain farmer-like man, with a good share of masculine common sense - not much accustomed to public speaking and yet I think we shall hear something from him.

The operation you propose will be an excellent test. - It will try the Free Soil members of Congress, and show how much the country is to expect from them. - They hold their seats by the votes - in part - of "radical" abolitionists, who, if they cannot be treated with some consideration, will perhaps begin to question the good

policy of voting for them.

Congress too, will have an opportunity to show whether they dare to look the discussion in the face. - or whether they will resort to gag law again. - The development came which way it will, must do good, by bringing the question before the people.

I like your form of petition, and its brief outline of a suggested argument. - I am in some doubt whether one item more should not be mentioned. Your item 1. reads - "That slavery cannot be legalized by the fundamental or Constitutional law." - This might be thought to imply that if the Constitution permitted or authorized it - it might be legalized? - I understand your reason for introducing the above, but might it not be so_ done as to avoid the above implication? - Suppose we say: -" 1. That slavery is, in itself, antagonistical to the first elements [on principles] of law, and therefore can never be legalized.

"2 That - if it could be legalized _ it could not be done unless it be authorized by the fundamental or Constitutional law."?

I am aware that the phrase "fundamental or Constitutional law" may include natural law. But people will not so understand it. They will think out written Constitutions only intended. - And they ought not to concedem by implication, that these can legalize slavery.

Will you not suggest some more of guarding that point?

Respectfully

Yours

W^m Goodell