

roduced by the Rev. J. Mitchell, Commissioner of Emigration. E. M. Thomas, the Chairman, remarked that they were there by invitation to hear what the Executive had to say to them. Having all been seated, the President, after a few preliminary observations, informed them that a sum of money had been appropriated by Congress, and placed at his disposition for the purpose of aiding the colonization in some country of the people, or a portion of them, of African descent, thereby making it his duty, as it had for a long time been his inclination, to favor that cause; and why, he asked, should the people of your race be colonized, and where? Why should they leave this country? This is, perhaps, the first question for proper consideration. You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated. You here are freemen I suppose.

A VOICE: Yes, sir.

The President—Perhaps you have long been free, or all your lives. Your race are suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong

president of the Anglo-African Institute for the Encouragement of Industry and Art. The committee's reception of Lincoln's views is indicated by a letter from Thomas written on August 16:

"We would respectfully suggest that it is necessary that we should confer with leading colored men in Phila New York and Boston upon the movement of emigration to the point recommended in your address.

"We were entirely hostile to the movement until all the advantages were so ably brought to our view by you and we believe that our friends and co-laborers for our race in those cities will when the subject is explained by us to them join heartily in sustaining such a movement. . . ." (DLC-RTL).

Subsequent developments, however, indicated that Negroes in the District of Columbia received the colonization proposal with hostility. A Negro meeting held at Union Bethel Church was reported in the *Baltimore Sun* on August 23 as protesting against the plan: "Such dissatisfaction had been manifested in regard to the course of the committee who lately waited on the president . . . that they did not attend. It was hinted that they had exceeded their instructions."

Plans were fully matured in August, however, to send Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy with "500 able-bodied negroes as the first colony" to be settled on a site on the Isthmus of Chiriqui to be selected by Pomeroy (*New York Tribune*, September 15, 1862). A letter of authority from Lincoln to Pomeroy was prepared for Lincoln's signature, probably by the State Department, under date of September 10, 1862, but remains unsigned in duplicate copies in the Lincoln Papers. The project was abandoned when first Honduras and later Nicaragua and Costa Rica protested the scheme and hinted that force might be used to prevent the settlement.

inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoy. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you.

I do not propose to discuss this, but to present it as a fact with which we have to deal. I cannot alter it if I would. It is a fact, about which we all think and feel alike, I and you. We look to our condition, owing to the existence of the two races on this continent. I need not recount to you the effects upon white men, growing out of the institution of Slavery. I believe in its general evil effects on the white race. See our present condition—the country engaged in war!—our white men cutting one another's throats, none knowing how far it will extend; and then consider what we know to be the truth. But for your race among us there could not be war, although many men engaged on either side do not care for you one way or the other. Nevertheless, I repeat, without the institution of Slavery and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence.

It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated. I know that there are free men among you, who even if they could better their condition are not as much inclined to go out of the country as those, who being slaves could obtain their freedom on this condition. I suppose one of the principal difficulties in the way of colonization is that the free colored man cannot see that his comfort would be advanced by it. You may believe you can live in Washington or elsewhere in the United States the remainder of your life [as easily], perhaps more so than you can in any foreign country, and hence you may come to the conclusion that you have nothing to do with the idea of going to a foreign country. This is (I speak in no unkind sense) an extremely selfish view of the case.

But you ought to do something to help those who are not so fortunate as yourselves. There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us. Now, if you could give a start to white people, you would open a wide door for many to be made free. If we deal with those who are not free at the beginning, and whose intellects are clouded by Slavery, we have very poor materials to start with. If intelligent colored men, such as are before me, would move in this matter, much might be accomplished. It is exceedingly important that