Hon. Phillip C. Garret

Dear Sir: You ask about the National Citizen's Rights Association. I am sick today — too sick for my work — and so have time to reply more at length than I otherwise would. Enclosed, you will find some papers bearing on the subject.

Nearly a year a ago in "A Bystander's Notes," which I write for the Chicago Inter-Ocean, in referring to ~~the~~ some of the atrocities which had just occurred, I asked if it was not about time for those who really loved liberty and believed ~~that~~ ~~in~~ in American citizenship as a fact and not a shame, should stand up and be counted. At the

same time I volunteered if names were sent me to enroll them and give a certificate of such fact. I expected a few scores of responses: we got ~~a hundred~~ thousands. Since that time it has been going steadily on. At first I signed the certificates and numbered them. Then ~~I had to get a clerk.~~ Mrs. T. helped me; then one of her sisters and her mother; then we had to hire a clerk. Now the whole household work at it, servants and all when they have any spare time. We procured a numbering machine. It only ran up to 100.000. We thought that enough. We have had to start a new series more than once.

What is its purpose? To do anything it may find a chance to do, to secure protection for the lives and rights of citizens of the

United States, in the United States, ~~and~~ equal political privilege, free speech ~~and~~ any an effective ballot to all qualified voters.

How does it propose to accomplish these ends?

1 – Wholly by peaceful and lawful means.

a – By finding out ~~who~~ how among our people are in favor of equal justice and adequate security to all citizens, who they are and where they are.

B – By asking such to give a little time and some shoe-leather to find out others like-minded on the subject.

C – By using the aggregate thus secured upon our rolls, to affect the action of religious, political and legislative bodies upon these questions.

Such memorials were presented to the Methodist Annual Conference whose actions you may have noted, to the Presbyterian

2 – By what agencies has this been accomplished.

A – Thus far no other agency has been employed than the voluntary efforts of individual members.

B – We have no publications except those enclosed herewith and the "Bystander's Notes" which appears every Saturday in the Chicago Inter-Ocean and are reprinted in the weekly, subscription price $1.00 – a year. These have been running there, thru columns a week on these subjects for five years. They go into 500,000 homes.

C – A friend provided funds for publishing 25,000 copies of "Liberty Worth Preserving." We sold them at about 10 cts and with the

money sent out others. We now send them to any address that may be furnished for 5 cts and with the surplus send out thousands gratuitously.

No other means have been employed — no lecturers — no lodges — no drums — no hippodroming.

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Whence come the funds for this work?

A — In the first place let me say that amazingly little money has been used. I don't know how we have done so much with so little, but from the fact that a family of five can do a good deal with spare time, especially if one of them is unable to read or write at night and has to do something and the rest have few social obligations and no amusements to interfere with their work.

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National Convention; to the Presbyterian General Assembly and are now having addressed to all Republican Congressional candidates.

D – By instigating aiding and assisting legal action upon ~~[illegible]~~ cases bearing upon these subjects.

For instance, the case against the Separate Coach law in Louisiana, in which I was counsel without pay, but drawing all the pleadings and directing the case.

We have another now pending and have just secured a man's release from jail in Mississippi who was imprisoned on a false charge for holding a meeting of colored men to discuss their situation.

E – By securing accurate information as to conditions and outrages in the South. We have now reliable agents in nearly every county of the South.

In the next place, it must be remembered that no money has been expended except for these items:

(1) Stationery
(2) Printing
(3) Postage

4 — Clerk hire (One girl all the time at $5.00, a week and 2 and 3 part of the time)

5 — My expenses to and from Minneapolis Convention where we had a headquarters — about $70.00

6 — Counsel-fees in Mississippi.

7 — Some small amounts for information.

A little money goes a good way under such circumstances.

As to the sources of this money, I know but little. Some of our people say God sent it, but that is assuming a good deal. All I can say is that I

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Know this and no more:

(1) Each one was asked to send stamps for return of certificate. Some sent more. I printed with this application lists &c, and sent them with each certificate. Then one and another sent small sums. We acknowledged them on the enclosed form (which is filled out to date) and applied them in the same way.

Nobody has been asked for any money except to pay counsel in Mississippi case $50 and for the "Jim Crow Car Fund", which was turned over as received to the New Orleans Committee. It amounts to something like $3500. The New Orleans branch has entire control of that, we merely receiving and transmitting for convenience.

(2) No account was kept of contributions in stamps under 25 cts, it all going into the postage paid out. Sometimes we are long on stamps and

short on money and then short on stamps and a head in cash.

(3) – One party contributed $225 to publish "Liberty Worth Preserving", the sale of that has produced the amount stated in the receipt. We undertake nothing unless we have the money in hand to pay for it. If we have not money to do we stop doing: that is all.

F – What do we propose to do in the future? Anything we find waiting to be done to promote these ends. If it is God's work and he supplies the funds we will go on. If it is not his work or he does not provide the means there it will end. One thing is sure, it will never be used to inflate any "leader's" balloon, or support any gang of "dead-beats" or oil any political "machine".

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What is its organization?

A – It has 250,000 on the rebuilt; probably 200,000 of them white and about that number at the North. The Southern white members about balancing the northern colored ones as near as we can judge. We can only guess as to race or color.

B – It has a central office where all members are enrolled. It is in my house. It has a President who with his family do the work. I dont know how many pamphlets &c it has sent out – All we could pay for printing and postage. ~~Probably~~ certainly several hundred thousands.

C – There is a general Administration Council. One has been our banker: one was until recently our pastor: One is a colored man (L. A. Martinet of the New Orleans crusader a colored man of very remarkable qualities) Two are colored women. (The colored women are wiser and

braver and truer than the men).

Thus far, the Council has done nothing except give me some good chur. There has been nothing for them to do. I would have called upon them sometimes for advice, but if I needed it, there was always scant time to consult them.

D – Advisory Committees have been appointed in some hundreds of counties. They have always been ~~the~~ ~~of~~ chosen from the most active members. Some of them have worked hard: some done nothing. No questions are asked as to race or sex in selecting them but only work. Some of the Committees are white and black, male and female. They all seem to work heartily together.

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E— Who are the members? Just common people. Farmers, mechanics, manufacturers, ministers, lawyers, doctors — every body. Some members of Congress. a few politicians — such among "big" people. A few months ago a member sent me $10. — to mail pamphlets, etc, to the members of the Illinois Conference. You are the first one who has been heard from. He was an Express Agent in Ill. was one who hoped thereby to awaken some active forces for good. I think he was disappointed. I was not. The men who talk are not always the ones who do.

Is any further organization contemplated?

If the means for initiating it are received we shall prepare and send out blanks to all the members for the organization of small local unions — not

to exceed 30 — members, to meet once a fortnight or once a week, and send to them a small publication which we propose to call "The American Citizen", which will contain a systematic course of study in citizenship — its character — obligations — duties — privileges — reciprocal relations between government and citizen — functions of parties &c.

With this will be news of the Association and statement of facts in regard to current conditions ~~of current~~ at the South, &c. the purpose being to encourage with all the study and extend the knowledge of the conditions of citizenship — the ~~st~~ relations of the individual to government and the governments to the individual.

What then?

Thus far we have only

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tried to cross bridges as we came to them. I do not know that there will ever be need of any thing more. The little "Unions" will be made up of ~~familiar associates~~ people familiar with each other — friends and associates. They will have no ~~[illegible]~~ organic relations to each other. There may be 100 in the same city. There can be no jar as no one will have any claim to go where he is not wanted.

But will there be no conventions, no delegates, no speeches, no parades, no eloquence, no agony?

I am not much of a believer in wind or wind instruments as means for the promotion of a good cause and not only do I see no use of these instrumentalities now but their employment would kill our work. Very many people who believe in justice are very shy of

practicing it and thousands who say they are willing the colored citizen should have equal rights, would abandon all idea of it, if they had to attend a public meeting and accord it to him. This is foolish and wrong but true. ~~It~~ Even our Methodist people dare not ask a Negro to commune with them. How shall this be avoided? There are two ways of getting past an obstacle. One is to try to climb over it; the other to walk around it. Every time you try to climb over this particular obstacle you make it more ~~a~~ serious and difficult. I don't care any thing about the prejudice. If it is a natural law that the races be kept distinct, that is God's affair not mine. If it is not a Divine law, it is your affair and mine, not Society's. That is my feeling and I never find any inclination to shirk its obligations. I treat a colored man as a gentleman, if he is one and esteem a colored woman a lady, if she is one.

Others must do as they choose, also. I do not think I have any right to endanger good results by trying to compel compliance with my notions.

On the other hand the colored man is very jealous. Some of the so-called "leaders" would rather the race never got on its feet unless they sat astride its shoulders. That is natural. There are just such white men, too.

The only hope of curing present evils and averting danger which impends and grows hourly more serious, in my opinion is to walk around this obstacle by these voluntary "unions" and through them, ~~is to~~ to impress the public conscience in that ~~part~~ of our country where men are free and votes are counted, with the duty and necessity of ~~action~~ individual effort. ~~Nearly 9 p~~ Less than 3 per cent of this population is colored. Hardly a larger portion of this is right upon this question than of the whites. It is impossible for them to touch or shape white sentiment. Both the fact and the reason should be apparent to everyone.

Of course, the ~~primary~~ chief benefit will primarily result to the colored race. But it is not a colored movement. They are oppressed because they are colored. But that is not the

reason they are entitled to protection, justice and an equal opportunity. That is because they are human beings, and citizens of the United States and a people whom we have wronged until our sin has ripened into curses in them unless healed by justice.

Now, if we carry on these groups, "Unions" or "Liberty Leagues" — whatever we may choose to call them, for a ~~three~~ two or three years course, on the Chautauqua plan, we shall develope on both sides this line, a common interest. We shall also have done something to make the best colored elements comprehend the best white elements and ~~vi~~ e converso. Then, if there is need for farther organization, the elements will be ready; they will come together without heat and act with each other without friction. Until that time, I think the man who attempts to force other methods or machinery on the cause will spoil what

has been done — or would if it were possible for any one to do so.

What will it require to organize these groups? 100,000 circulars will be enough to reach a sufficient number of the members. An edition of #10,000. of the first number of "The American Citizen" will be enough to send to each inquirer. There is no need of a broadside distribution. If 1,000 "Unions" are formed — that would be 30,000 members only, will pay for a small paper — often one must make it a mere question-leaf. I think that number would be formed in 90 days — perhaps a good many more but I am never sanguine. If that number is secured the movement will support itself and the "movement" will rest on it does more on the shoulders of the members. No motion will be made in that direction until we have funds to print the forms and circulars, the first edition of the little paper and mail them to the members.

Will we get it? I don't know. I hope and

money; only a few minutes of work each day to give for I support a family on my pen's point. This I will give if ~~[illegible]~~ any good can be achieved. But I am not at all anxious and I am quite willing God should choose another hand and another way to secure the end which I have no doubt he will secure and teach the truth by one more lesson that the only cure for wrong is right, for injustice justice. I am not hungering nor thirsting to carry out this plan. I do not believe any man is necessary to God or the world. I am neither a seeker for popularity or political power nor am I in the ordinary sense anything at all of a philanthropist. I love justice and would like to see the country healed of her shame. To this I have given my life, asking nobody's aid or favor and never failing to tell the truth to white or black, if I know the truth. If I am called on to carry this work further I shall do so without ~~[illegible]~~ whining. [I do not think so great a fire was ever kindled by so small a spark before which [illegible] [illegible] it must be what is needed at this time [illegible] $1000. [illegible] may not think so and in that case of course it will stop.] [illegible] clubs have been formed there should be an

advisory Council formed of one member to every 500, of "Unions," not making it too large. I think there should be chosen by the ~~[illegible]~~ present Council and further members ~~chosen~~ elected by the Council on nomination of the President. The "Unions" should choose the President after the first year, and every second year afterwards.

I cannot see that anything more is needed. Many a good cause has been killed by too much machinery and ~~[illegible]~~ over much talk in its infancy. I don't know whether this is what you expect or desire but it is all I have to offer in reply to your enquiry.

Sincerely Yours

Wm. D. Longyear