The Emancipation Proclamation

Name

Institution

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**Introduction**

The Emancipation Proclamation facilitated the end of slavery in the United States. On the 1st of January 1963, President Abraham Lincoln delivered the Emancipation Proclamation demanding all the people that were held as slaves to be set free (Masur, 2015). This came at a time during which America was engaged in a Civil War. The proclamation was released just at the right time and proved to influence a great impact on the war and the efforts of the Union. Before releasing the Emancipation Proclamation, the US Congress passed a legislation in 1861, the First Confiscation Act, which authorized taking away any possessions, including slaves, from the rebel states, that were used in the revolt against the government (Masur, 2015). Although President Lincoln was initially afraid of connecting the abolition drive with the war, he eventually drafted the Emancipation Proclamation to end slavery in the rebel states.

**Summary**

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on 1st January 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln, almost three years into a bloody civil war. It declared that all people who were under slavery in the rebel states were, from then on, free. However, despite the proclamation being so influential, it was constrained in many ways. First, it only applied to those states that had separated from the Union and left slavery to continue in the other states. It also categorically excluded some regions of the Confederate states that were already under the control of the Northern part. More fundamentally, the independence it pledged relied upon the victory of the Union army. Although it did not instantly bring slavery to an end the nation's oppression, it brought hope to the African Americans and profoundly changed the Civil War's character. After the announcement of the proclamation, the president ordered the federal troops to advance forces to the regions where slavery was abolished, expanding the freedom's domain.

Also, it declared that black men could join the Union military forces, to contribute to the liberation efforts. By the time the war ended, about 200,000 African American soldiers had taken part in the war for the Union, and for freedom. The Proclamation insisted that freedom could only be achieved with the victory of the Union, thus encouraging the black soldiers to participate actively for their liberation. As a result, this enhanced the Union's moral force, and also reinforced its military and political influence. The closing statement of the document is also powerful, as Lincoln stresses that he believes his actions would ensure justice for all.

Lincoln considered slavery to be immoral and denial of justice and freedom to fellow human beings, but he never intended to interrupt it when he came into the presidency. He made this clear during the inaugural address and even after the beginning of the war. During this time, the constitution was still in support of slavery (Masur, 2015). The states were granted the freedom of owning slaves by the constitution, and because of this, Lincoln was worried that attempting to end slavery would go against the constitution, and that could impede the support he needed to end the war. However, he used a different approach to end slavery, using the Civil War. Lincoln knew that confiscating the wealth and property of the rebelling states during the war would weaken them. Freeing the slaves hinder their crop production, for lack of labor.

**Analysis**

President Abraham Lincoln came into power at a time when the country was in a Civil War between the citizens and the states. The country was also divided between the Northern and Southern parts (Foner, 2014). The Northerners supported the abolition of slavery while the idea was opposed in the South, where slavery was high up. The issue of slavery was one of the major causes of the Civil War. With the increasing population in the North, the Southern states gradually lost their influence in the federal government. The anti-slavery supporters from the Northern states were able to block the spread of slavery to the west. Angry that their state rights to make their own decisions about slavery, the Southerners seceded from the Union, marking the start of the Civil War (Masur, 2015).

Three slaves escaped from their masters and were stopped by the Union Army, who did not return them. Hearing this, even more, slaves escaped to become contraband of war. Congress then passed the Confiscation Act the same year to give all the slaves the contraband status (Masur, 2015). A second act was passed the following year, forbidding the officers from returning the escaped slaves to their masters. This changed the war’s focus, and the issue of slavery became vital. Lincoln was encouraged by states to eradicate slavery in the South completely, and he also knew that that would increase his support from the allied states. He, therefore, decided to proclaim to free all slaves held in the South, but his advisors thought that this step would be very drastic. Lincoln, however, used his executive powers to declare the freedom of all slaves through the Emancipation Proclamation of 1st January 1863 (Foner, 2014). The freed slaves were allowed to work freely for reasonable wages, and many of them signed up in the Union Army.

**References**

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