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Bedford Gazette

VOLUME 60.

Freedom of Thought and Opinion.

WHOLE NUMBER, 3095

NEW SERIES.

BEDFORD, PA., FRIDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1865.

VOL. 8, NO. 30.

Table of Advertising rates: One square, one insertion, 10 cents; One square, three insertions, 25 cents; etc.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

Federal and Confederate Versions of the Proceedings.

Separation NOT Demanded by the South.

Gen. Grant thinks the Southern Commissioners were sincerely desirous to restore Peace and Union!

Lincoln's Negro Policy the Great Obstacle to Peace.

To the Honorable the House of Representatives: In response to your resolution of the 18th inst. requesting information in relation to a conference...

To F. P. Blair, Esq.: Sir—I have deemed it proper, and probably desirable to you, to give you in this form the substance of the remarks made by me...

To F. P. Blair, Esq.: Sir—your having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the 12th inst., you may say to him that I have constantly been, and now, and shall continue to be, your agent...

To-day Mr. Blair tells me that on the 21st inst. he delivered to Mr. Davis the original of which the within is a copy, and left it with him...

The following telegram was received at Washington, January 29th, 1865: From Headquarters Army of the James...

From Headquarters Ninth Army Corps, Jan. 29—Major Gen. J. G. Parke. Hon. QRS. ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

It appears that about the time of placing the foregoing telegram in my hands the Secretary of War despatched Gen. Ord as follows, to wit:

WAR DEPT., WASHINGTON CITY, Jan. 29, 1865, 10 P. M. To Maj. Gen. Ord: This Department has no knowledge of any understanding by Gen. Grant to allow any person to come within his lines as commissioners...

WAR DEPT., WASHINGTON, D. C., 10 A. M., Jan. 30, 1865. To Major General F. O. C. Ord, Headquarters Army of the James:

By direction of the President you are instructed to inform the three gentlemen, Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, that a message will be despatched to them at or near where they now are, without unnecessary delay.

WAR DEPT., WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 2, 1865. To Major T. T. Eckert:

Sir—You will proceed with the documents placed in your hands and on reaching Gen. Ord will deliver him the letter addressed to him by the Secretary of War. There are Gen. Ord's assistance, procure an interview with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, or any of these deliver to him or them, the paper on which your own letter is written.

To Messrs. Alex. H. Stephens, J. A. Campbell and R. M. T. Hunter: Gentlemen—I am instructed by the President of the United States to place this paper in your hands, with the information that it will pass through the United States military lines...

To F. P. Blair, Esq.: Sir—Your having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the 12th inst., you may say to him that I have constantly been, and now, and shall continue to be, your agent...

To his Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States: The following communication was received here last evening: Petersburg, Va., Jan. 30, 1865.

To Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, commanding the Army of the United States: Sir—We desire to pass your lines under safe conduct, and to proceed to Washington to hold a conference with President Lincoln upon the subject of the existing war...

I have sent directions to receive these gentlemen, and expect to have them at my quarters this evening awaiting your instructions.

[Sent in cipher at 1.30, P. M.] When Major Eckert departed he bore with him a letter of the Secretary of War to Gen. Grant, as follows, to wit:

WAR DEPARTMENT, Washington, Jan. 30, 1865.—Lieut. Gen. Grant, commanding the Army of the United States: The President desires that you will please proceed for the bearer, Major Thomas T. Eckert, an interview with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, and if on his return to you, he requests it, pass them through our lines to Fortress Monroe by such route and under such military precaution as you may deem prudent...

By order of the President, E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War. Supposing the proper point to be then reached, I despatched the Secretary of State, with the following instruction, Major Eckert, however, going ahead of him:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, Washington, Jan. 31, 1865.—Hon. W. H. Seward, Secretary of State: You will proceed to Fort Monroe, there to meet and informally confer with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell on the basis of my letter to F. P. Blair, Jan. 18, 1865, a copy of which you have. You will make known to them that three things are indispensable, to wit:

First. The restoration of the national authority throughout all the States. Second.—No meddling by the Executive of the United States on the slavery question from the position assumed thereon in the late annual message to Congress and in preceding documents.

On the day of its date the following telegram was sent to Gen. Grant: WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 1, 1865.—Lieut. Gen. Grant, City Point, Va.: Let nothing which is transpiring change, hinder or delay your military movements or plans.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 1, 1865.—Hon. W. H. Seward, Secretary of State: Let nothing which is transpiring change, hinder or delay your military movements or plans.

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identially, but not officially, to become a matter of record, that I am convinced, upon conversation with Messrs. Stephens and Hunter, that their intentions are good and their desire sincere to restore peace and Union.

This has placed me in an awkward position, which I could have avoided by not sending them in the first instance. I now fear their going back without any expression from my part...

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 2, 1865. Say to the gentlemen that I will meet them personally at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can get there.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 2, 1865. Hon. W. H. Seward, Secretary of State: Induced by a despatch from Gen. Grant, I join you at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can come.

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ered to me at Fortress Monroe at 4.30 P. M., February 2, by Lieutenant Col. Balcock, of Gen. Grant's staff.

On the morning of Feb. 3, the three gentlemen, Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell came aboard of our steamer and had an interview with the Secretary of State and myself of several hours' duration.

The foregoing, containing as it is believed all the information sought, is respectfully submitted.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 10, 1865. The following was included in the message sent to the Senate:

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decision of the President. Major Eckert was sent down to meet the party from Richmond at Gen. Grant's headquarters.

If they should express their assent to this condition in writing, then Major Eckert was directed to give them safe conduct to Fortress Monroe, where a person coming from the President would meet them.

The Richmond party was brought down the James river in a United States steam transport, during the day, and the transport was anchored in Hampton Roads on the morning of the 3d.

The conference was altogether informal. The subject was written or read, was then, carefully discussed, and the Richmond party approached the discussion rather indirectly, and at no time did they make categorical demands or tender formal stipulations or absolute refusals.

It was suggested by them that through such postponement we might now have immediate peace, with some, not very certain, prospect of an ultimate satisfactory adjustment of political relations between the government and the States, section or people now engaged in conflict with it.

The anti-slavery policy of the United States was reviewed in all its bearings, and the President announced that he must not be expected to depart from the positions he had heretofore assumed in his proclamation of emancipation and other documents.

It was further declared by the President that the complete restoration of the national authority everywhere was an indispensable condition of any assent on our part to whatever form of peace might be proposed.

The Richmond party were then informed that Congress had on the 31st ult., adopted, by a constitutional majority, a joint resolution submitting to the several States the proposition to abolish slavery throughout the Union.

The conference came to an end by mutual acquiescence, without producing an agreement of views upon the several matters discussed, or any of them.

Mr. Blair visited Richmond with this letter and then again came back to Washington. On the 29th instant we were advised from the camp of Lieutenant General Grant that Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter and John A. Campbell, were applying for leave to pass through the lines to Washington, as peace commissioners to confer with the President.

For Southern account, see inside.