

Why the Peace Conference failed.
It is best to keep facts before us, for they make history. The country should know why the peace conference at Fort Monroe failed to bring peace to the nation. There is a great responsibility somewhere, and every drop of blood shed, after peace was attainable, and not concluded, is on somebody's garments.

The following letters seem to be the foundation upon which Jefferson Davis and President Lincoln rested their respective claims to conclude a peace. So far as conditions were made in writing, they are as follows:

THE COMMISSIONERS TO MAJOR SECKEL.
CITY POINT, VA., FEB. 1, 1865.

Major: Your note delivered by yourself this day has been received. In reply we have to say that we were furnished with a copy of the letter of President Lincoln to Francis P. Blair of the 18th of January, ult., another copy of which is appended to your note. Our intentions are contained in a letter of which the following is a copy:

In conformity with the letter of Mr. Lincoln, of which the foregoing is a copy, you are to proceed to Washington, D. C., for information with him upon the terms involved in the existing war, and for the purpose of securing peace to the two countries.

With great respect,
Your obedient servant,
Jefferson Davis.

The substantial offer to be obtained by the informal conference, is to ascertain upon what terms the existing war can be terminated honorably. Our instructions contemplate a personal interview between President Lincoln and our selves, at Washington, but with this explanation we are ready to meet any person or persons that President Lincoln may appoint, at such place as he may designate. Our earnest desire is that a just and honorable peace may be secured, and we are prepared to receive or to submit propositions which may possibly lead to the attainment of that end.

Very respectfully yours,
ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS,
R. M. T. HUNTER,
JOHN A. CAMPBELL.

This is all we know, of record, of the views of the rebel government. Davis' letter to Messrs. STEPHENS, HUNTER and CAMPBELL, contains all that is certain of rebel views about the mode of securing peace. Mr. LINCOLN, who was at the conference, says in his message to Congress:

"On our part the whole substance of the instructions to the secretary of state hereafter recited was stated and insisted upon, and nothing was said inconsistent therewith. While by the other party it was not said that in any event or on any condition they would consent to reunion. And yet they equally would not declare that they would so consent."

Here we have Mr. LINCOLN's version of the conference. The rebel commissioners did not say that they would never consent to return to the union, but they also limited to say that they would so consent. This is President Lincoln's view, and a very muddy one it is.

Now let us see what were the conditions which Mr. LINCOLN imposed upon their return to the union, and which his Secretary Seward "insisted" upon. They are thus explicitly stated by Mr. L. himself:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, Jan. 31, 1865."

Hon. Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State:
You will proceed to Fort Monroe, Va., there to meet and informally confer with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter, and Campbell, on the basis of my letter to P. P. Blair, Esq., of January 18, a copy of which you have. They 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 recognition by the executive of the United States of the slavery government from the position assumed in the late annual message to Congress; and in the preceding documents; no cessation of hostilities short of an end of the war and the disbanding of all the forces hostile to the government. You will inform them that all propositions of theirs not inconsistent with the above, will be considered and passed upon in a spirit of sincere liberality. You will hear all they may choose to say, and report to me. They will not assume to definitely consummate anything.

Yours, &c.,
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Here we have the whole story. Mr. LINCOLN, before Seward left Washington to meet the rebel commissioners, gave him instructions as to the terms on which the southern people might return to the union, and these terms were just the ones which he knew would not be accepted, viz: The abolition of slavery by the south, and submission to the conditions of his last annual message and the emancipation proclamations, which he very innocently calls "the preceding documents." Mr. LINCOLN having made his conditions, and "insisted" upon them, as he says, there was certainly but little room for the rebels to say much. Need the country be greatly surprised that the "conference ended without results"? He professed to meet these southern commissioners to heal the bleeding wounds of the north and south; but, like an unskillful surgeon, he first probes and lacerates the very place which has given pain and energy to the people of the states in rebellion.

The president seems to have but one remedy for the ailments of the nation, and that is the destruction of domestic slavery in the south. The abolitionists would not allow him, we suppose, to make peace on any other conditions, and hence the war must go on—conspiracies continue—the national debt accumulate, and another hundred thousand gallant soldiers fall a sacrifice to the bloody degrees of those whom STEPHEN A. DOUGLASS rightly named "the abolition confederates." They are the CONFEDERATES, the MARATHON and ROSEBERRY of the horrible drama inaugurated in 1861, and prayed for by them these thirty years past. These abolitionists and rebels are the architects of our nation's ruin, and the people, without regard to party divisions, must put them down, or all will be lost.

Fire in the Cincinnati Enquirer Office.
On Sunday morning last the Enquirer office was threatened with destruction by fire. A good deal of damage was done before it was subdued. The proprietors estimate their loss at over \$50,000 on which there was an insurance of \$41,000—\$12,500 on the building and \$38,500 on stock. The damage however did not interfere with the regular publication of the paper, both daily and weekly. We are pleased to notice that the proprietors of The Gazette and Commercial promptly and generously tendered all the assistance in their power to their unfortunate neighbor. The Enquirer says of the origin of fire and the damage:

The fire broke out in the upper story, which is used as our news room and storage department for pictorial bills, cuts, etc. How the fire originated we are at a loss to know, although there are various theories expressed—one of which being that the dripping of oil from the cog wheels and machinery of the printing apparatus into some rubbish produced spontaneous combustion. The flames soon wrapped the show bills in a sheet of fire, the composition of which being of thick paper and colored ink, it required but a very few minutes for the heat to become intense, and the windows giving way, the black smoke and lurid flames rushed forth in terrible fury. The burning of the fire king about the bills and wood cuts, and the crackling, rattling noise of its majesty among the type, cases, stands, etc., in the news room admonished the firemen of the immense exertions which would be required of them to save the lower part of the building. The engines Citizens' Fire, Fourth, Fourteenth,

Tenth, Fifth, and First were speedily on the ground and almost instantly were at work throwing their great streams of water on to the burning element. The black immediately gave way, white smoke, but such was the quantity with which the fire clung to the building, that three hours of incessant labor was performed before the element was subdued and conquered. The lower part of the building was completely deluged, and great damage had been inflicted from the water. Every room in the building was flooded, while in the basement the depth of water was about four feet. There is no doubt but that the tar roof which covers our establishment assisted in confining the flames to the upper story, which fire to ten minutes more of a start, would certainly have reduced the entire establishment to ashes.

The extent of the damage sustained by the fire was the total destruction of our news room in which were the type cases, cast stands, imposing stands, desks, chairs, &c., &c. In the room adjoining, on the same floor, and divided by a board partition, where were kept the pictorial bills used for various circus and variety companies, and their wood cuts, the destruction was complete, and, particularly at this season of the year, is almost irreparable.

The stock of bills in this room was of all sizes, from the first class to the smallest, while the wood cuts, the accumulation of fifteen years, will require a long time to be replaced, if ever they can be restored as perfect and complete as they were. It is not to be said that the Enquirer job room can boast of the largest assortment and stock of wood cuts of any other office in America, if not in Europe.

In confining the flames to the upper story, will not be less than \$40,000. On this floor, which is used wholly for our job-room, the water did a great deal of damage to the wood type, presses, bills, paper, &c. The estimate of the damage sustained in this department has not yet been ascertained.

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INDIANA LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

TUESDAY, February 28, 1865.

The Senate met at 2 o'clock p.m. The reading of the secretary's minutes of yesterday's session was read and approved. On motion of Mr. Allison the further reading thereof was dispensed with.

PER DIEM TO THE STATE PRISON COMMITTEE.

On motion by Mr. Dunning it was Resolved, That each member of the committee on state prison be allowed \$3 for every twenty-five miles traveled in visiting the southern and northern prisons of this state, and that the auditor draw his warrant on the treasurer of state for said several amounts upon the certificate of the president of the Senate that said services were rendered.

SESSION HOUSE.

On motion of Mr. Van Buskirk it was Resolved, That when the Senate adjourn it adjourn till tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

Mr. Terry presented two petitions praying for a majority liquor license law, and referred to the committee on temperance without reading. Mr. Terry also presented a petition from the citizens of Fulton county, praying for a legislative enactment to the effect that the estate of W. Mann, deceased, late treasurer of Fulton county, from paying the sum of \$2,878 92, money belonging to the state, stolen from the county safe when said Mann was treasurer of said county. It was referred to the committee on claims. He subsequently presented a remonstrance from the same source, which took the same course.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

The committee on claims reported favorably on the following accounts:

W. R. Holloway & Co., for Daily Journal,

\$728 25;

J. H. Jordan, for Daily Gazette, \$145 75;

E. J. Metzger, for Weekly Free Press,

\$34 65;

C. K. Kessler, for sundries, \$5;

E. S. Miles, for towel rollers, \$3 50;

Bowen, Stewart & Co., for stationery, \$56 28;

Charles E. Hawthorne, 5 dozen volkshans,

\$34 55;

Merritt & Co. for stationery, \$159 60, and

\$249 80, and \$167 10, and \$232 25.

The committee on corporations recommended the passage of the bill S. 157, amending the charter of the city of Madison.

The judiciary committee recommended the passage of the bill S. 130, providing for the finishing up of the business of a regular session by the adjournment of the court.

The state prison committee recommended that the bill S. 33, (see p. 44) lie on the table.

Which reports were concurred in.

The state prison committee also made a report recommending the passage of bill S. 153, (see page 193).

On motion by Mr. Brown, of Wells, the report and bill were laid on the table.

The committee on state prison submitted a lengthy report on the condition of the southern prison, closing by recommending the raising of an investigating committee of one senator and two representatives to sit during the recess of the legislature and make a report on the affairs of the southern prison, with full powers to send for persons, papers, etc.

Mr. Corbin dissented from certain portions of the report.

Mr. Allison pronounced the northern and southern prisons an incubus upon the state and drain upon the treasury.

Mr. Vawter was opposed to all these kinds of legislative committees—they never amount to anything.

The report was concurred in by yeas 22, nays 20.

So the report was concurred in.

STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The judiciary committee reported, in answer to a resolution of inquiry, that the congressional donation for the establishment of an Agricultural College can be accepted any time within five years from the passage of the act of Congress.

INDIANA FEMALE COLLEGE.

On motion of Mr. Thompson his bill 181 was read the first time and referred to the committee on corporations.

HARBOR AT MICHIGAN CITY.

On motion of Mr. Niles the bill H. R. 7, was read the second and third times under a dispensation of the constitutional provision and finally passed by yeas 47, nays 0.

COUNTY AND OTHER BONDS.

On motion by Mr. Bennett the Senate proceeded to consider the House amendments to the bill S. 8.

Mr. Bradley, after voting for the amendment of the Senator from Howard, I took occasion to make inquiry of distinguished lawyers of our state, both republican and democratic, and I was answered by them that a law of that character would be unconstitutional, and believing that it is our duty to make our legislation conform to the requirements of the constitution of our state, I therefore move to reconsider the vote of the Senate upon this bill.

Mr. Williams asked that the vote be reconsidered and that the Senate take the bill as it came from the House, with one simple amendment, and let it become a law as soon as possible. The amendment destroys the efficiency of the bill if it is allowed to remain.

Mr. Oiler understood that so far as his information was concerned the soldiers do not ask us to tax them (as was proposed in this bill), to provide ways and means to keep others out of the army. This amendment does not propose to exempt a soldier from taxation, but provides that the tax collector shall receive to those who have been or are now in the field for service and labor performed to the amount of their tax as assessed in this state, and that the amount be stricken out of the bill in this Senate.

Mr. Allison hoped the Senate would adhere to the amendment, it is so manifestly right and just. He was satisfied there was no valid constitutional objection to the amendment.

Mr. Cullen insisted that this bill ought to pass and pass with this amendment incorporated in it. He was sure the amendment was constitutional, and hoped the Senate would stand firm.

Mr. Cobb argued against the constitutionality of the bill, citing numerous authorities and appealing to the constitution itself to sustain his argument. He desired to guard this bill so that no unconstitutional amendment should be incorporated in it.

Mr. Carson moved to lay the motion to reconsider on the table.

The motion was agreed to by yeas 26, nays 18.

The House amendments and the amendments of the committee of the whole were then concurred in.

REVENUE FOR 1865 AND 1866.

On motion of Mr. Carson the bill H. 160, was read the third time and finally passed by yeas 43, nays 0.

WHITE WATER VALLEY CANAL.

Mr. Vawter moved that the Senate proceed to the orders of the day.

Mr. Beeson proposed to amend the motion by an order that the Senate proceed to consider the bill S. 106.

On motion of Mr. Vawter the amendment was laid on the table by yeas 24, nays 22.

Mr. Richmond proposed an amendment substituting the bill S. 130.

On motion of Mr. Hanna the amendment was laid on the table by yeas 21, nays 19.

Mr. Vawter demanded the previous question. There was a second of 36 yeas; the main question was ordered, and being yeas 47, nays 0.

The Senate agreed to the motion for the orders of the day.

Mr. H. R. Brown, of Wells, moved to take up the bill H. 89, and upon that motion demanded the previous question.

The demand was seconded by twenty-six Senators.

After some conversation across the house by Messrs. Oiler, Van Buskirk, Dunning, Bennett, Oiler and Cobb—

The second to the demand for the previous question was withdrawn, and—

Mr. Cullen had leave to report from the committee on canals and internal improvements the bill H. R. 99.

On motion of Mr. Dunning the bill was read the second time.

On motion of Mr. Bennett the further consideration thereof was postponed till 2 o'clock tomorrow.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE TREASURY.

On motion by Mr. Carson, House bills 140 and

153 were read the first time and then by title and referred to appropriate committees.

NEW PROPOSITIONS.

The committee on organization of courts introduced a bill prescribing the time within which persons elected to the office of judge of the circuit, common pleas or probate court shall qualify, and that in default of their qualifying within the prescribed time there shall be a vacancy in the office, and declaring an emergency; which was read the first time only and referred to the committee on corporations.

By Mr. Oiler, 193, to amend section 4 and 5 of the act incorporating Knights of St. Henry county, approved Feb. 2, 1857. Read the second time by title only, and referred to the committee on corporations.

By Mr. Williams, 194, requiring the state board of agriculture to publish semi-annual, and making appropriations therefor.

By Mr. Goff, 195, legalizing and declaring valid judgments and other proceedings had before the Dearborn county common pleas court, held in Feb. 1855.

SHERIFF'S FEES.

On motion of Mr. Bennett, the bill S. 185 was read the second time and ordered engrossed for the third reading.

And the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE.

Met at 9 a.m. Mr. Speaker in the chair.

A call of the roll was ordered.

Mr. Miller, of Clinton, announced the absence of Mr. Cook, on account of sickness—confined to his room.

Mr. Milroy stated that Mr. Humphreys was absent on account of sickness from day to day.

Mr. Speaker—The clerk reports no quorum here.

After a lapse of time, the chair suggested a call of the House.

The order was taken, without a division, and the clerk proceeded—the clerk still reporting no quorum.

Mr. Speaker directed the proper officers to close the doors.

Mr. Newcomb moved that the absentees be sent for.

Mr. Brown demanded the yeas and nays thereon.

Mr. Speaker directed the clerk to read the 14th rule.

Mr. Speaker—the gentleman from Jackson (Mr. Brown) will perceive that no motion is necessary to despatch the proper officers after absentees.

Mr. Church suggested that Mr. Shney was sick.

Mr. Brannan, he would be here if necessary to make a proper keeper.

The door keeper reported Mr. Lasselle present and under arrest.

Mr. Lasselle did not know that he was under arrest till it was announced from the chair. He had been kept in the room.

Mr. Newcomb moved that he be discharged from arrest without fine or censure.

Mr. Brown rose to a question of order. The gentleman from Cass was not under arrest.

The speaker. The gentleman coming in after the doors were shut, made it a technical arrest.

Finally, Mr. Lasselle was honorably discharged from custody.

Mr. Shney was reported present by the door keeper.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, he was discharged without fine or censure.

Mr. Patterson appeared, was excused, and took his seat.

Mr. Speaker then announced a quorum.

Further call of the House suspended.

Mr. Brannan moved to dispense with the reading of yesterday's journal.

Mr. Buskirk desired the reading of the same, at least the latter portion.

The journal was read from the presentation of Mr. Brannan's point of order.

The objection was made to the statement that 10 members were present and not voting upon Mr. Brannan's resolution. Several gentlemen participated in the debate.

Mr. Higgins distinctly remembered the presence of the gentleman from Jackson, (Mr. Brown).

Mr. Newcomb also remembered it.

Mr. Brown knew positively that he had made up his mind to be absent during the vote. That was his impression. He might have been caught at the close. He moved that the journal be amended by striking out his name.

Mr. Buskirk. The question what the law of the House is, ought to be settled. He thought we ought to get back to the old-fashioned way—conform to established usages. He withdrew his motion and suggested that it were better that we now go to work.

Mr. Goff said that to his certain knowledge gentlemen had been counted and recorded as voting when they were round the above.

Mr. Speaker stated that the clerk had read concerning members present and not voting.

Mr. Buskirk. The rule was clear requiring a member to be within the bar. But present ruling conferred powers on the clerk that ought never to be given to a ministerial officer.

After four debates the journal as partly read was authorized and approved.

Mr. Brown raised a point of order on the adoption as recorded of Mr. Brannan's resolution yesterday. No quorum having voted, the resolution was invalid.

The speaker admitted that there were doubts in his mind on the subject. He had voted no on it.

Subsequently, upon conversation with the chair, the House it was agreed that bill 176 be taken up without reference to points of order involved in the ruling upon the resolution submitted yesterday by Mr. Brannan.

GENERAL APPROPRIATION BILL.

On the motion to suspend the regular order of business and take it (176) up the yeas were 73, nays 0.

The bill was read a second time, and after discussion was referred to the committee on ways and means, with amendments, without reading thereon.

On motion of Mr. Boyd the northern prison bill, 132, and the Samuel H. Patterson bill, 72, were also referred to the committee on ways and means.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADVANCE OF \$250,000.

On motion of Mr. Brown, Mr. Brannan's bill 133, ratifying the action of the governor in procuring the advance for the preparation of troops for the service of the United States; directing the payment of the unexpended balance into the treasury of the state, and for the account of the advance, and the president as money advanced to the state, was taken up and read a second time.

On the further motion of Mr. Brown, the rules being suspended, the bill was considered engrossed, read a third time and passed—yeas 67, nays 11.

REPORTER SUPREME COURT.

On motion of Mr. Buskirk, Senate bill 101 with reference to supreme court reporter, was taken up and passed to a second reading.

U. S. DISTRICT TAX.

On motion of Mr. Newcomb, Mr. Brannan's bill 140, ratifying the action of the governor in setting and discharging the state's quota of direct tax of 1861 (\$304,575 85), and authorizing him to settle all unsettled claims of the state against the United States, was passed to the third reading.

Several clerical errors were corrected, the rules suspended, the bill considered engrossed, read the third time, and passed. Yeas 73, nays 1.

MORGAN RAIL.

On motion of Mr. Buskirk, the Senate Morgan rail bill, 15, was taken up, passed to the second reading, and referred to a select committee of Mr. Oiler, and Mr. Buskirk, Church, Sullivan, of Scott, Kilgore, and Wright.

On motion of Mr. Chambers, the House adjourned.

AFTERNOON.

House met at 2 o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker in the chair.