

DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SPEECHES, RESOLUTIONS AND A MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS.

Election of Delegates to the National Convention.

MORE SPEECHES AND AN ADJOURNMENT

There was a large attendance at St. Patrick's Hall, when the convention was called to order at twelve o'clock. Hon. John C. Moncure in the chair.

Upon a call of the roll of parishes, a quorum was found to be present.

The two parishes of Webster and Caddo reported the arrival of additional delegates.

On motion, the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.

Mr. Lewis, of Orleans, asked for a suspension of the rules, in order that he might offer a resolution.

Objection was made but was afterward withdrawn.

Mr. Lewis said he would like to state the subject matter of the resolution. It is to ask of this convention an indorsement of the action of Governor John McEnery, Lieutenant-Governor D. B. Penn and ex-Speaker L. A. Wiltz, in regard to the Louisiana case, and their unceasing devotion to the same.

R. W. Marsden, of Red River, moved that the resolution be referred to the committee on resolutions.

Mr. Dupre, of Orleans, said the motion of the gentleman was out of order, as the resolution was not before the convention.

The chairman asked if there was any objection to the suspension of the rules.

Objection being made, the yeas and nays were called for, and the motion to refer was lost.

Mr. A. L. Tucker, of St. Mary, said:

Mr. Chairman—I imagine that the resolution which has just been read will meet with the hearty approval of every member upon the floor of this convention. The history of John McEnery, D. B. Penn and L. A. Wiltz and their confederates, in their struggle for a republican form of government in Louisiana, is known from one end of the land to the other.

A member of the convention arose, and asked if the motion was debatable.

Mr. Tucker—I beg the gentleman's pardon; he may be better acquainted with the rules of parliamentary law than I am, but I will, nevertheless, tell him that the motion is debatable. I am not going to make any preliminary remarks upon this subject; I only say, sir, that that resolution is but the response of the whole people of this State, and that it is certainly worthy of your attention, and that it does not require the deliberation of the committee on resolutions. It is a matter clearly independent in itself.

I therefore move, Mr. Chairman, that the rules be suspended, so that the unanimous consent of the members of this convention—and by that means we will show to the world that we at least believe that the gentlemen named in that resolution have been true to the trusts confided to them.

Mr. Carlous, of Webster—Mr. Chairman, it is impossible for us to hear; we don't understand the character of the resolution before the house, therefore, there is not a man in this assembly that could vote intelligently upon the subject, and I therefore call for a rereading of the resolution, and the rules be suspended to make my vote; I have no objection to it, but there are a great many on this floor that don't even know what the resolution is, and therefore don't want to vote until they do so.

The resolution was again read, as follows:

Resolved, That as the representatives of Louisiana, we hereby declare that to the Hon. John McEnery, the lawful Governor of this State, to the Hon. D. B. Penn, the lawful Lieutenant-Governor, and to the Hon. Louis A. Wiltz, ex-Speaker of the house of Representatives, are due the heartfelt thanks of the people of this State.

It is our unselfish devotion and self-sacrifice to the cause of liberty and free government, his unflinching courage and untiring efforts in resisting the oppression of Radicalism and defending the rights of the people, the career of Governor McEnery is surpassed by none and equaled by few in the annals of devoted patriotism.

During the absence of Governor McEnery, the able and energetic Governor Penn, in the struggle which was crowned with the glories of the fourth of September, exhibited qualities of head and heart which have won for him the respect and admiration of the people of Louisiana, and on the third of January, 1875, amid the stirring scenes of that day, when the liberties of the State were trampled under foot, and the flag of the Republic was invaded by the military, in defiance of all law and right, the Hon. Louis A. Wiltz, with heroic fortitude, clear and correct judgment and unswerving patriotism, sought to obtain, and preserved to us, the control of the lower house of the General Assembly.

The Chair again put the question, "Is there any objection to the suspension of the rules?"

Mr. Morrison—Mr. Chairman, I object to the suspension of the rules of this convention, as the suspension is very limited, and a great many of the country members have to leave for their homes this evening. I think, therefore, the rules should not be suspended. I am convinced that the adoption of a resolution, but one that commends itself to every member upon the floor of this house, I hope it will be adopted.

A vote being had the chair announced that the yeas clearly had a majority, and the rules were suspended.

Mr. Gauthreaux, of Orleans—Mr. Chairman, before the resolution is adopted, I wish to call the names of Hon. Robert M. Lusher and the Hon. John C. Moncure be inserted in the resolution.

Judge Monroe, of Orleans—Mr. Chairman, I would also request that the name of the Hon. R. N. Ogden, our Attorney General, be inserted in that resolution.

Mr. Dupre, of Orleans, then moved the adoption of the resolution as amended.

The chair announced the resolution, as amended, unanimously adopted.

Mr. Mitchell, of Claiborne—Mr. Chairman, I move that the Hon. Thomas R. Vaughn, of the parish of Caddo, who was legally elected a member of the House of Representatives by the bayonets of United States troops on the fourth of January, 1875, be invited to a seat upon the platform.

Mr. Morrison, of Caddo—Mr. Chairman, I move that Mr. J. D. Quinn, who was legally elected a member of the House of Representatives by the bayonets of United States troops, be invited to a seat upon the platform of this house.

The chair declared both motions unanimously carried.

Mr. Quinn—Mr. Chairman, I feel very

much flattered by being invited to a seat upon the platform, but as I feel more at home on the platform down here (referring to the floor of the house), I ask to be allowed to remain. [Laughter.]

Orleans—Mr. Chairman, I move that as the gentleman was ejected by force from the House of Representatives, he be placed upon the stand by force. [Renewed laughter.]

Mr. Decatur moved that the convention proceed to the election of sixteen delegates to the National Democratic Convention.

The chairman was of the opinion that as some of the delegates were absent from the hall it would be advisable to postpone the election until their return, as that would enable them to vote. He didn't think it would be well to go into an election at the present time.

Mr. Decatur—Mr. President, in making this motion, I do not propose to avoid the necessity of calling another convention previous to the assembling of the Democratic National Convention; so that the campaign may be short one, and also that this may do all the business between this time and the assembling of the national convention.

Mr. De Clout, of St. Martin, moved to amend that motion by the insertion of "and sixteen alternates."

At this time S. J. A. Smith, of Orleans, offered a resolution in reference to McEnery and Kellogg, which was voted down.

The chairman stated that the election of sixteen delegates to the national convention would be gone into before the close of the convention. Four out of the sixteen delegates would be delegates at large and two delegates from each congressional district in the State, making twelve—sixteen in all—together with sixteen alternates.

No objection being made, this plan of procedure was adopted.

Mr. Tucker, of St. Mary, understood that the committees appointed by the convention yesterday were ready to hand in their reports.

Mr. Lewis, of Orleans, asked the chairman to invite the committees to take a seat by him on the platform, which was done.

Mr. Voorhies, of Orleans, chairman of the committee on resolutions—Mr. President, the committee on resolutions has the honor to report. The majority report is signed by seventeen members of the committee, and a minority report is signed by one member. I will now proceed to read the report of the committee on resolutions.

WHEREAS, The usurpation of the government of the State of Louisiana, through the perversion of functions of the general government, by the usurping State Senate, and the people of this State, and while it is a constant menace to the perpetuity of representative institutions, and the federal Congress, whose duty it is to guarantee to the people of the United States a republican form of government, can not ignore the present condition of despotism and anarchy so detrimental to the material interests of Louisiana;

WHEREAS, The Wheeler adjustment had no reference whatever to the elections of November, 1872, nor did it even extend to all the contested elections of November, 1874, but was a mere device to divide the House of Representatives and to two contested seats in the Senate among the new elected Senators; and

WHEREAS, The said adjustment never pretended to ascertain or determine anything beyond the status of these contested seats of the General Assembly, and inasmuch as the Wheeler adjustment is strictly defined and limited by constitutional provisions, and it was not competent for them to submit to arbitrations the conflicting claims of the rival State governments, and the people of Louisiana, praying for relief at the hands of Congress, by our representatives in Congress.

2. That the primary test of membership of the Democratic Conservative party of Louisiana is an unrelenting opposition to all political affiliations, all those who join in the crusade against the usurpation are in full fellowship in the party.

3. That we advocate the abolition of useless offices, more especially that of tax collectors, which offices should be re-named to the sheriff, and a reduction of salaries, fees and perquisites of office, and to whom the spoils of the various departments of the city and State governments.

4. We advocate a substantial reduction of salaries of the legislature, and while we are in favor of meeting punctually the payment of the legitimate debt of Louisiana, we are immovably opposed to the recognition of the dishonest and fraudulent claims of the name of the State; and we pledge ourselves to make a searching investigation in the matter.

5. We advocate the reduction of the expenditures for public printing, and demand that the whole system of police and public printing be reformed.

6. We declare our hearty opposition to all measures which would:

7. We recognize and reaffirm the Democratic doctrine that gold and silver be the legal currency, and favor a return to a specie basis as soon as it can be done without injury to the material interests of the country.

After the report was read, Mr. Leonard, of Caddo, who signed the minority report, arose and said:

Mr. chairman and gentlemen of the convention, I desire to present the following protest against the resolution adopted by the convention, and signed by Mr. Chairman, that it be filed with the majority report.

[Mr. Leonard's protest was not permitted to get into the hands of the reporters.]

This request was received with silence.

Mr. Dupre, of Orleans, moved that the report of the committee on resolutions be adopted as whole.

Mr. Tucker, of St. Mary, asked—As a majority report?

The chairman said there was no minority report.

Mr. Cros, of East Feliciana—Mr. Chairman, I am with extreme reluctance that I reply to the report read from that platform. I do not propose, sir, to enter into any lengthy discussion upon the merits of the report, but I believe that the Republican policy of a slow approach to specie payment, is one which has been largely discussed in this country, and one in which the country interests of the country is concerned. I am not willing, sir, to go upon this record as opposed to the views of those gentlemen on a frivolous ground. This, sir, is a very

grave question, and one which I think demands the gravest attention. It is a question beyond the power of this convention to determine. That question may be decided by the national Congress. It is no question for us here to decide, whether we will have green or gold money. We have the right to hold the money we have got. So far as I am concerned, I am opposed to it, and I ask for its re-consideration again of the last section of that report.

The section was read.

Mr. Lewis, of Orleans, moved that the report of the committee on resolutions be adopted.

Mr. Dupre, of Orleans, rose for information. He desired to know what effect this protest of Mr. Leonard would have upon this report.

The chair answered, "None whatever. It is merely filed as a report of one of the members."

Mr. Dupre asked if it formed any part of the report.

The chair replied, "No, sir; none whatever."

Mr. Dupre then moved the adoption of the report.

The report was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Richardson, of Ouachita, moved that the protest of Mr. Leonard be spread upon the minutes of the convention.

The chair answered that it could be done.

Mr. Marr, of Orleans, announced that the committee on memorials and address was ready to report.

The report was called for.

The committee was invited to the stand.

Mr. Chairman, preliminary to reading this report, I will state that out of the committee of nine, eight were present. Judge Merrick, of the committee, was not present and does not concur in the report. He took no part in the deliberations, because he was attending to business elsewhere at the time of the meeting.

Mr. Marr then read the report as follows: To the President, and to the Senate and House of Representatives, the United States of America.

We, the people of the State of Louisiana, assembled in convention through our regularly chosen delegates, respectfully present this our memorial and petition, and ask for its respectful consideration.

We assume that a government established before both houses of Congress that the acting government in the State of Louisiana is a usurpation; that the individuals personally named in this report are the usurpers of the State, but, on the contrary, were unquestionably defeated at the elections held for the offices which they fill in 1872 and 1874; that this usurpation is an crime committed against our State, and permit it no longer to remain a precedent for the overthrow of other States.

And this we urge, not only that we may be relieved from the shackles of the law of usurpation, but that, as a people, we may present to the nations of the earth the spectacle of a republic, perfect not only in its form, but in its substance, and that the constitutional government through all its members.

R. H. MARR, Chairman; JAMES JEFFRIES, Secretary; K. A. CROSS, W. R. RICHARDSON, E. W. HUNTINGTON.

Several portions of the report were received with cheers and applause.

Mr. Smith, of Orleans—I move, in addition to that report, that we respectfully petition the Congress of the United States that they take prompt action in the matter of the people of Louisiana of their constitutional right of self-government. In case that is not done, an election for State officers can not be held except by order of the United States, and the people of Louisiana should be confined to the United States army.

The motion was laid on the table.

Mr. Gauthreaux, of Orleans, moved that the report of the committee on memorial and address be adopted as the memorial of this convention.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Judge E. T. Merrick, of Orleans, was invited to a seat on the platform.

Judge Merrick said: Mr. chairman and gentlemen, I was not present with the committee during the deliberations before this report was adopted. It is a matter of the most important nature that has been presented to this convention. There are many things I find in it which I heartily agree with, and which I think it is our duty to support; that I can not indorse. There are some things in that report which I would prefer to have left out, because I do not believe that they are necessary to the memorial which we are presenting to Congress. I do not think it at all desirable that action should be taken at this time. I differ with my friends in Congress that this petition should be presented to Congress, and I believe that the Wheeler compromise is a just and honorable compromise.

Now I will tell you, gentlemen, how this thing strikes me. At the time the Wheeler compromise was adopted, it was thought by those who accepted it that it was the best thing that could be done at the time. Its adoption certainly did some good, as it settled the question of the government of Louisiana, and it gave us a government of the State. We are striving to put the government of the State of Louisiana into the hands of intelligent men, and to get it out of the hands of ignorant men, and I think we have partly succeeded—at least in the lower house we have a majority.

We did succeed in carrying the election, and we did everything in our power to have the report of the committee adopted. We all know the result of the fourth of January—how they were removed from the hall of the House of Representatives, and strangers were allowed to enter the hall, and to forget that our people, goaded to the last extremity, had no other choice than that of accepting the Wheeler compromise. To get back a little to the events that have taken place in this State within the past eighteen months; how our people, goaded by the injuries heaped upon them by the usurper, rose up and expelled the usurper, and gave the government of Kellogg from power. It only made them still more our enemies. What did they do? Why, they sent General Phil Sheridan down here and ordered him to take the State back, and he has ever been retained in any hall of Representatives in this country was witnessed in our House of Representatives, when our members of the General Assembly were driven from their place by armed soldiers of the United States. We were then given to understand that the military power of the United States, was to be invoked to aid in the overthrow of the government of the usurper. What next? The committee of the United States Congress was sent down here, having for their object the return of the State of Louisiana to Congress. They made their report, and what has been done? Nothing, actually nothing.

One thing, however, was accomplished. Shortly after the return of the committee to Washington, a compromise was effected, one of the members of that committee acting as a compromiser, and by that compromise, sir, we were enabled to get the House of Representatives out of the hands of the usurper, and to get it into the hands of the people who were driven out on the fourth of January previous. Sir, that was the best thing we could have done, as at that time we were in the power of the military authority of the United States. We were in

favor of the military and by that compromise the military rule was withdrawn, and the government was left in the hands of representatives. I say again that the best thing we could have done was to accept the terms offered to us. We did. The compromise was accepted.

Now, gentlemen of the convention, let us look at this thing as men that are disposed to look upon things calmly and dispassionately; like men that have done all that they could do, and can not do any more. And I, therefore, think that a memorial to Congress at this time should not be considered, and that the question of the compromise should again be open, and we would have to go through the same ordeal again. Now, sir, what good would it do, I ask, were we to look upon things calmly and dispassionately; like men that have done all that they could do, and can not do any more. And I, therefore, think that a memorial to Congress at this time should not be considered, and that the question of the compromise should again be open, and we would have to go through the same ordeal again. Now, sir, what good would it do, I ask, were we to look upon things calmly and dispassionately; like men that have done all that they could do, and can not do any more. 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