THE PEACE FAILURE.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S REPORT.

ALL ABOUT THE BLAIR MISSION.

THE OFFICIAL ORDERS, LETTERS, &C.

MR. LINCOLN'S PILGRIMAGE.

A BRIEF AND USELESS CONFERENCE

Secretary Seward's Letter to Minister Adams.

New-York Daily Tribune.

VOL. XXIV.....No. 7,442. NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1865. PRICE FOUR CENTS.

WASHINGTON, Friday, Jan. 10, 1865.

To the Honorable the House of Representatives:

In response to your resolution of the 5th inst., requesting information in relation to a conference recently held in Hampton Roads, I have the honor to state that on the day of the date I gave Francis P. Blair, senior, a card written on as follows, to wit:

Allow the bearer, F. P. Blair, senior, to pass our lines, go South and return. A. LINCOLN.

December 28, 1864.

That at the time, I was informed that Mr. Blair sought the card as a means of getting to Richmond, Va.; but he was given no authority to speak or act for the Government, nor was I informed of anything he would say or do on his own account or otherwise. Mr. Blair told me that he had been to Richmond, and had seen Mr. Jefferson Davis, and he (Mr. Blair) at the same time left with me a manuscript letter, as follows, to wit:

RICHMOND, Va., Jan. 12, 1865.

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 be repeated by you to President Lincoln, etc., etc.

I have no disposition to find obstacles in forms, and am willing now, as heretofore, to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace.

I am ready to send a commission whenever I have reason to suppose it will be received, or to receive a commission if the United States Government shall choose to send one.

Notwithstanding the rejection of our former offers I would, if you could promise that a commissioner, minister, or other agent would be received, appoint one immediately and renew the effort to enter into a conference with a view to secure peace to the two countries. Yours, etc., JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Afterward, with the view that it should be shown to Mr. Davis, I wrote and delivered to Mr. Blair a letter, as follows, to wit:

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18, 1865.

F. P. BLAIR, esq.—*Sir:* You having shown me Mr. Davis's letter to you of the 12th inst, you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now, and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other influential person now resisting the national authority may informally send me with a view of securing Peace to the people of our common country.

Yours, etc., A. LINCOLN.

Afterward Mr. Blair dictated for and authorized me to make an entry on the back of my retained copy of the letter last above recited, which is as follows:

JANUARY 28, 1865.

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. That at the time of delivering Mr. Davis read it over twice in Mr. Blair's presence. At the close of which he (Mr. B.) remarked that the part about our one common country related to the part of Mr. Davis's letter about the two countries, to which Mr. D. replied that he so understood it. A. LINCOLN.

Afterward the Secretary of War placed in my hands the following telegram, indorsed by him, as appears:

OFFICE UNITED STATES MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT.
Cipher.]

The following telegram was received at Washington Jan. 27, 1865:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE JAMES, Jan. 29—6:30 p. m.

Hon. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War:*

The following dispatch is just received from Maj.-Gen. Parke, who refers it to me for my action. I refer it to you, in lieu of Gen. Grant's absence.

E. O. C. ORD, Major-Gen. Commanding.

HDQRS. ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, Jan. 29, 1865—4 p. m.

Major-Gen. E. O. C. Ord, Headquarters of the Army of the James:

The following dispatch is forwarded to you for your action. Since I have no knowledge of Gen. Grant's having had any understanding of this kind, I refer the matter to you as the ranking officer present in the two armies. JOHN G. PARKE, Major-Gen. Comdg.

HDQRS. NINTH ARMY CORPS, Jan. 29, 1865.

Major-Gen. JOHN G. PARKE, Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac:

Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter and J. A. Campbell desire to cross my lines, in accordance with an understanding claimed to exist with Lieut.-Gen. Grant, on their way to Washington as Peace Commissioners. Shall they be admitted? They desire an early answer, so as to come through immediately. They would like to reach City Point to-night if they can. If they cannot do this, they would like to come through at 10 a. m. to-morrow morning.

O. B. WILSON, Major, Comdg. Ninth Corps.

Respectfully referred to the President for such instructions as he may be pleased to give.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

January 29, 1865—8:30 p. m.

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

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, Jan. 29, 1865—10 p. m.

Major-Gen. ORD: This Department has no knowledge of any understanding by Gen. Grant to allow any person to come within his lines as commissioners of any sort. You will therefore allow no one to come into your lines under such character or profession until you receive the President's instructions, to whom your telegrams will be submitted for his directions.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Sent in cypher at 2 a. m.

Afterward, by my directions, the Secretary of War telegraphed Gen. Ord, as follows, to wit:

WAR DEP'T., WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., 10 a. m.—January 30, 1865.

Major-Gen. E. O. C. ORD, Headquarters of the Army of the James:

By direction of the President you are instructed to inform the three gentlemen, Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, that a messenger will be dispatched to them at or near where they now are without unnecessary delay. EDWIN M. STANTON, Sec'y of War.

Afterwards, I prepared and put into the hands of Maj. Thomas T. Eckert the following instructions and message:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, January 30, 1865.

MAJ. 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 him by the Secretary of War. Then by Gen. Ord's assistance procure an interview with Messrs Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, or any of them. Deliver to him or them the paper on which your own letter is written. Note on the copy which you retain the time of delivery and to whom delivered. Receive their answer in writing, waiting a reasonable time for it, and which, if it contain their decision to come through without further conditions, will be your warrant to ask Gen. Ord to pass them through as directed in the letter of the Secretary of War. If by their answer they decline to come or propose other terms do not have them passed through. And this being your whole duty return and report to me. Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

Messrs. ALEXANDER 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 if you pass through the United States military lines, it will be understood that you do so for the purpose of an informal conference on the basis of that letter, a copy of which is on the reverse side of this sheet, and that if you choose to pass on such understanding, and so notify me in writing, I will procure the commanding General to pass you through the lines and to Fortress Monroe, under such military precautions as he may deem prudent, and at which place you will be met in due time by some person or persons for the purpose of such informal conference; and further, that you shall have protection, safe conduct and safe return, in all events.

THOS. T. ECKERT, Major and Aid-de-Camp.

City Point, Va., Feb. 1, 1865.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18, 1865.

F. P. BLAIR, esq.—*Sir:* Your having shown me Mr. Davis's letter to you of the 12th inst., you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now, and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other influential person now resisting the national authority may informally send to me with the view of securing peace to the people of our common country.

Yours, &c., A. LINCOLN.

Afterward, but before Maj. Eckert had departed, the following dispatch was received from Gen. Grant:

OFFICE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT.
Cipher.]

The following telegram, received at Washington, January 31, 1865, from City Point, Va., 10:20 a. m.:

JANUARY 31, 1865.

To His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *President of the United States.*

The following communication was received here last evening:

PETERSBURG, Va., Jan. 30, 1865.

Lieut.-Gen. U. S. GRANT, *Commanding Armies 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, and with a view of ascertaining upon what terms it may be terminated in pursuance of the course indicated by him in his letter to Mr. Blair of January 18, 1865, of which we presume you have a copy, and if not, we wish to see you in person, if convenient, and to confer with you on the subject.

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

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

U. S. GRANT, Lieut.-Gen. Com. Armies U. S.

This, it will be perceived, transferred Gen. Ord's Agency in the matter to Gen. Grant. I resolved, however, to send Maj. Eckert forward with his message, and accordingly telegraphed Gen. Grant as follows, to wit:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, Jan. 31, 1865.

Lieut.-Gen. GRANT, City Point, Va:

A messenger is coming to you on the business contained in your dispatch. Detain the gentlemen in comfortable quarters until he arrives, and then act upon the message he brings as far as applicable, it having been made up to pass through Gen. Ord's hands, and when the gentlemen were supposed to be beyond our lines. A. LINCOLN.

Sent in cipher at 1:30 p. m.

When Maj. Eckert departed he bore with him a letter of the Secretary of War to Gen. Grant as follows, to wit:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Monday, Jan. 30, 1865.

Lieut.-Gen. GRANT, *Commanding, etc.*

GENERAL: The President desires that you will please procure 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 precautions as you may deem prudent—giving them protection and comfortable quarters while there—and that you let none of this have any effect upon your movements or plans.

By order of the President.
EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Supposing the proper point to be then reached, I despatched the Secretary of State with the following instructions—Major Eckert, however, going ahead of him:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, Jan. 31, 1865.

Hon. WM. H. SEWARD, Secretary of State:

You will proceed to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, there to meet and informally confer with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell, on the basis of my letter to F. P. Blair, esq., of 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 receding 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 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 it to me. You will not assume to definitely consummate anything.

Yours, &c., ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

On the day of its date the following telegram was sent to Gen. Grant.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, Feb 1, 1865.

Lieut.-Gen. GRANT, City Point, Va.:

Let nothing which is transpiring change, hinder, or delay your military movements or plans. A. LINCOLN.

Sent in cipher at 9:30 a. m.

Afterward the following dispatch was received from Gen. Grant.

OFFICE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT.
Cipher.]

The following telegram received at Washington, at 2:30 p. m., Feb. 1, 1865; from City Point, Va., Feb. 1, 12:30 p. m., 1865.

His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President of the United States:

Your dispatch received. There will be no armistice in consequence of the presence of Mr. Stephens and others within our lines. The troops are kept in readiness to move at the shortest notice if occasion should justify it. U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant General.

To notify Maj. Eckert that the Secretary of State would be at Fortress Monroe, and to put them in communication, the following dispatch was sent:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 1865.

Maj. T. T. ECKERT, care Gen. GRANT, City Point, Va.:

Call at Fortress Monroe and put yourself under direction of Mr. S., whom you will find there. A. LINCOLN.

On the morning of the 2d inst., the following telegrams were received by me respectively from the Secretary of State and Maj. Eckert:

FORTRESS MONROE, Va., Feb. 1, 1865—11:30 p. m.

The President of the United States:

Arrived at ten this evening. Richmond party not here. I remain here. W. H. SEWARD.

CITY POINT, VA., 10 p. m., Feb. 1, 1865.

His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President of the United States:

I have the honor to report the delivery of your communication and my letter at 4:15 this afternoon, to which I received a reply at 6 p. m., but not satisfactory. At 8 p. m. the following note addressed to Gen. Grant, was received:

CITY POINT, VA., Feb. 1, 1865.

To Lieut.-Gen. GRANT—SIR: We desire to go to Washington City to confer informally with the President personally in reference to the matters mentioned in his letter to Mr. Blair of the 18th ultimo. Without any personal compromise on any question in the letter, we have the permission to do so from the authorities in Richmond.

Very respectfully yours,
ALEX. H. STEPHENS,
R. M. T. HUNTER,
J. A. CAMPBELL.

At 9:30 p. m. I notified them that they could not proceed further unless they complied with the terms expressed in my letter. The point of meeting designated in the above note would not, in my opinion, be insisted upon. I think Fortress Monroe would be acceptable. Having complied with my instructions, I will return to Washington to-morrow, unless otherwise ordered. THOMAS T. ECKERT, Major, &c.

On reading this dispatch of Major Eckert's, I was about to recall him and the Secretary of State, when the following telegram of Gen. Grant to the Secretary of War was shown to me:

OFFICE OF THE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT.
Cipher.]

The following telegram received at Washington at 4:35 a. m., Feb. 2, 1865, from City Point, Va., Feb. 1, 1865—10:30 p. m.:

Hon. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War:

Now that the interview between Major Eckert under his written instructions and Mr. Stephens and party has ended, I will state confidentially, 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. I have not felt myself at liberty to express any views of my own or to account for my reticence.

This has placed me in an awkward position, which I could have avoided by not seeing them in the first instance. I fear now their going back without any expression to any one in authority, will have a bad influence. At the same time, I recognize the difficulties in the way of receiving their informal Commissioners at this time, and I do not know what to recommend. I am sorry, however, that Mr. Lincoln cannot have an interview with the two named in this dispatch, if not all three now within our lines. Their letter to me was all that the President's instructions contemplated to secure their safe conduct if they had used the same language to Maj. Eckert. U. S. GRANT, Lieut.-Gen.

This dispatch of Gen. Grant changed my purpose and accordingly I telegraphed to him and the Secretary of State as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 2, 1865.

Lieut.-Gen. GRANT, City Point, Va.

Say to the gentlemen that I will meet them personally at Fortress Monroe, as soon as I can get there. A. LINCOLN.

Sent in cipher at 9 a. m.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 2, 1865.

Hon. WM. H. SEWARD, Fortress Monroe, Va.

Induced by a dispatch from Gen. Grant, I join you at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can come. A. LINCOLN.

Sent in cipher at 9 a. m.

Before starting the following dispatch was shown me. I proceeded nevertheless.

OFFICE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT.
Cipher.]

The following telegram was received at Washington, Febuary 2, 1865, from City Point, Va., 9 a. m., February 2, 1865:

[Copy to Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Washington.]

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State, Fortress Monroe.

The gentleman here have accepted the proposed terms, and will leave for Fort Monroe at 9:30 a. m. U. S. GRANT, Lieut.-Gen.

On the night of the 2d I reached Hampton Roads; found the Secretary of State and Major Eckert on a steamer anchored off the shore, and learned of them that the Richmond gentlemen were on another steamer, also anchored off shore, in the Roads, and that the Secretary of State had not yet seen or communicated with them. I ascertained that Maj. Eckert had literally complied with his instructions, and I saw for the first time the answer of the Richmond gentlemen to him, which in his dispatch to me of the 1st, he characterizes as not satisfactory. That answer is as follows, to wit:

CITY POINT, Va., Feb. 1, 1865.

THOMAS T. ECKERT, *Major and A. D. C.*

MAJOR: Your note, delivered by yourself this day, has been considered. 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:

RICHMOND, Saturday, Jan. 28, 1865.

In conformity with the letter of Mr. Lincoln, of which the foregoing is a copy, you are to proceed to Washington City for informal conference with him upon the issues 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 object 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 ourselves 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 agreed upon, 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.

A note of these gentlemen subsequently addressed to Gen. Grant has already been given in Maj. Eckert's dispatch of the 1st inst. I also saw here, for the first time, the following note addressed by the Richmond gentlemen to Maj. Eckert:

CITY POINT, Va., Feb. 2, 1865.

THOMAS T. ECKERT, *Major and A. D. C.*—MAJOR: In reply to your verbal statement that your instructions did not allow you to alter the conditions upon which a passport could be given to us, we say that we are willing to proceed to Fortress Monroe, and there to have an informal conference with any person or persons that President Lincoln may appoint on the basis of his letter to Francis P. Blair of the 18th of January ultimo, or upon any other terms or conditions that he may hereafter propose not inconsistent with the essential principles of self-government and popular rights upon which our institutions are founded.

It is our earnest wish to ascertain, after a free interchange of ideas and information, upon what principles and terms, if any, a just and honorable peace can be established without the further effusion of blood, and to contribute our utmost efforts to accomplish such a result. We think it better to add that in accepting your passport we are not to be understood as committing ourselves to anything, but to carry this informal conference the views and feelings above expressed.

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

NOTE.—The above communication was delivered to me at Fortress Monroe, at 4:30 p. m., Feb. 2, by Lieut.-Col. Babcock, of Gen. Grant's staff.

THOS. T. ECKERT, Major and A. D. C.

On the morning of the 3d 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. No question of preliminaries to the meeting was then and there made or mentioned. No other person was present. No papers were exchanged or produced, and it was in advance agreed that the conversation was to be informal and verbal merely. On our part the whole substance of the instructions to the Secretary of State herein before 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 ever would consent to reunion; and yet they equally omitted to declare that they would so consent. They seemed to desire a postponement of that question, and that the adoption of some other course first, which as some of them seemed to argue might or might not lead to reunion, but which course we thought would amount to an indefinite postponement. The conference ended without result.

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Executive Mansion, Feb. 10, 1865.

The following was inclosed in the message sent to the Senate:

To the PRESIDENT: The Secretary of State, to whom was referred a resolution of the Senate of the 8th inst., requesting the President of the United States, if in his opinion it is not incompatible to the public interest, to furnish to the Senate any information in his possession concerning recent conversation or communications with certain Rebels said to have occurred under Executive sanction, including communications with the Rebel Jefferson Davis, and any correspondence relating thereto, has the honor to report that the Senate may properly be referred to a special message of the President bearing upon the subject of the resolution and transmitted to the House this day. Appended to this report is a copy of the instruction which has been addressed to Charles Francis Adams, esq., Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at London, and which is the only correspondence found in this Department, touching the subject referred to in the resolution.

Respectfully submitted, WM. H. SEWARD.

Department of State, Washington, Feb. 10, 1865.

MR. SEWARD TO MR. ADAMS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, Feb. 9, 1865.

SIR: It is a truism that in times of peace there are always instigators of war; so soon as a war begins, there are citizens who emphatically demand negotiations of peace. The advocates of war, after an agitation longer or shorter, generally gain their fearful end, though the war declared is not unfrequently unnecessary and unwise. So peace agitators in time of war ultimately bring about an abandonment of the conflict, sometimes without securing the advantages which were originally expected from the conflict. The agitators for war in time of peace, and for peace in time of war, are not necessarily or perhaps ordinarily unpatriotic in their purposes or motives. Results alone determine whether they are wise or unwise. The treaty of peace concluded at Guadaloupe Hidalgo, was secured by an irregular negotiation under the Don of the Government.

Some of the efforts which have been made to bring about negotiations with a view to end our civil war are known to the whole world, because they have employed foreign as well as domestic agents. Others with whom you have had to deal confidentially are known to yourself although they have not publicly transpired. Other efforts have occurred here, which are known only to the persons actually moving in them and to the Government. I am now to give for your information an account of an affair of the same general character which recently received much attention here, and which doubtless will excite inquiry abroad.

A few days ago Francis P. Blair, esq. of Maryland, obtained from the President a simple leave to pass through our lines without definite views known to the Government. Mr. Blair visited Richmond, and on his return he showed to the President a letter which Jefferson Davis had written to Mr. Blair, in which Davis wrote that Mr. Blair was at liberty to say to President Lincoln that Davis was now, as he always had been, willing to send commissioners, if assured they would be received, or to receive any that should be sent; that he was not disposed to find obstacles in forms, that he would send commissioners to confer with the President with a view to a restoration of peace between the two countries if he could be assured they would be received.

The President, therefore, on the 18th day of January addressed a note to Mr. Blair, in which the President, after acknowledging that he had read the note of Mr. Davis, said that he was, is, and always should be willing to receive any agents that Mr. Davis, or any other influential man now actually resisting the authority of the Government, might send to confer informally with the President, with a view to the restoration of peace to the people of our common country.

Mr. Blair visited Richmond with this letter, and then again came back to Washington.

On the 29th ult. we were advised from the camp of Lieut.-Gen. 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. They were permitted by the Lieutenant-General to come to his headquarters to await there the decision of the President. Maj. Eckert was sent down to meet the party from Richmond at Gen. Grant's Headquarters. The Major was directed to deliver to them a copy of the President's letter to Mr. Blair, with a note to be addressed to them, and signed by the Major, in which they were directly informed that should they be allowed to pass our lines, they would be understood as coming for a an informal conference upon the basis of the aforesaid letter of the 18th of January to Mr. Blair.

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. It being thought probable from a report of their conversation with Lieut.-Gen. Grant that the Richmond party would in the manner prescribed accept the condition mentioned, the Secretary of State was charged by the President with the duty of representing this Government in the expected informal conference. The Secretary arrived at Fortress Monroe on the night of the 1st day of February. Major Eckert met him on the morning of the 2d of February, with the information that the persons who had come from Richmond had not accepted in writing the conditions upon which he was allowed to give them conduct to Fortress Monroe.

The Major had given the same information by telegraph to the President at Washington. On receiving this information the President prepared a telegram directing the Secretary to return to Washington. The Secretary was preparing at the same moment to so return, without waiting for information from the President but at this juncture, Lieut.-Gen. Grant telegraphed to the Secretary of War, as well as to the Secretary of State that the party from Richmond had reconsidered and accepted the condition tended them through Major Eckert, and Gen. Grant urgently advised the President to confer in person with the Richmond party. Under these circumstances, the Secretary by the President's direction remained at Fortress Monroe and the President joined him there on the night of the 2d of February.

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 President, attended by the Secretary, received Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell on board the United States steam transport River Queen, in Hampton Roads. The conference was altogether informal. There was no attendance of secretaries, clerks or other witnesses. Nothing was written or read. The conversation, though earnest and free, was calm and courteous and kind on both sides. The Richmond party approached the discussion rather indirectly, and at no time did they make categorical demands or tender formal stipulations or absolute refusals.

Nevertheless, during the Conference—which lasted four hours—the several points at issue between the Government and the insurgents were distinctly raised and discussed fully, intelligently, and in an amicable spirit. What the insurgent party seemed chiefly to favor was a postponement of the question of separation upon which the war is waged, and a mutual direction of the efforts of the Government as well as those of the insurgents to some extrinsic policy or scheme for a season during which passions might be expected to subside, and the armies be reduced, and trade and intercourse between the people of both sections be resumed. 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 suggestion though deliberately considered was nevertheless regarded by the President as one of armistice or truce, and he announced that we can agree to no cessation or suspension of hostilities except on the basis of the disbandment of the insurgent forces and the restoration of the national authority throughout all the States in the Union. Collaterally and in subordination to the proposition which was thus announced 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, as these positions were reiterated in his Annual Message.

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 President assured the other party that while he must adhere to these positions, he would be prepared so far as power is lodged with the Executive, to exercise liberality. Its power, however, is limited by the Constitution, and, when peace should be made, Congress must necessarily act in regard to appropriations of money and to the admission of representatives from the insurrectionary States.

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, and that there is every reason to expect that it will be accepted by three fourths of the States, so as to become a part of the national organic law.

The conference came to an end by mutual acquiescence, without producing an agreement of views upon the several matters discussed, or any of them. Nevertheless, it is perhaps of some importance that we have been able to submit our opinions and views directly to prominent insurgents, and to hear them in answer in a courteous and not unfriendly manner.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, WM. H. SEWARD.

Deaths of Soldiers

IN THE HOSPITALS IN AND ABOUT NEW-YORK

For two weeks ending Feb. 8, 1865.

REPORTED WEEKLY FOR THE NEW-YORK TRIBUNE, BY A. J. CASE, GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKER, NO. 397 GRAND STREET, N. Y.

Boughton, Benj., age 42; Co. C, 203d Pa.; residence when enlisted, Pennsylvania.
Brennen, Patrick, age 28; Co. E, 160th N. Y.; residence when enlisted, Jefferson Co., N. Y.
Beer, Joseph, age 36; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Bunnell, James, M. age 30; Co. E, 203d Pa.; residence when enlisted, Bush, Susquehanna Co., Pa.
Clendell, Nicholas, age 34; Co. H, 36th Ill.; residence when enlisted, Illinois.
Cole, Amos E. age 17; Co. G, 142d N. Y.; residence when enlisted, Hamilton, N. Y.
Davis, Robert, age 33; Recruit 13th Kentucky; residence when enlisted, Whitley Co., Ky.
Fisher, Ruben; Co. K, 21st Michigan.
Fulton, Geo. E., age 26; Co. C, 4th Vt.; residence when enlisted, Strawford, Orange Co., Vt.
Hall, Sergt. Elijah; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Kinyon, Horace A., age 18; Co. G, 117th N. Y.; residence when enlisted, Oneida Co., N. Y.
Hann, Henry, age 32; Conscript; residence when enlisted, Illinois.
Kelly, William, age 35; Co. G, 7th N. Y. Art.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Leonard, Orville; Co. K, 13th Mich.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Loveledy, Samuel D.; Co H, 31st Mich.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Longer, Carl, age 24; Co. K, 7th N. H.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Havens, Egbert S., age 29; Co. B, 21st Mich.; residence when enlisted, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Harding, Ziba, age 22; Co. E, 203d Pa.; residence when enlisted, Wyoming Co., Pa.
McCart, James M., age 20; Co. K, 53d Indiana; residence when enlisted, Orangeville, Ind.
Moore, Geo. L., age 20; Co. C, 64th Ill.; residence when enlisted, Green Co., Ill.
Miller, Levi, age 22; Co. D, 13th Ind.; residence when enlisted, Indiana.
Mattin, Zeb.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Netler, J. H., age 18; Co. I, 34th Ill., residence when enlisted, unknown.
Owen, Ewen F., age 40; Co. B, 29th Pa.; residence when enlisted, Philadelphia.
Pitts, Elijah; Co. K, 13th Mich.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Plummer, Geo. W., age 27; Co. B, 25th Ohio; residence when enlisted North Fairfield, Ohio.
Ryan, John; 29th Pa.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Randall, David, age 24; Co. C, 5th Ohio Cav.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Savage, Horace, age 36; Co. B, 12th N. Y. Cav.; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Shay, Daniel R., age 22; Co. K, 203d Pa.; residence when enlisted Clumbie, Lawrence Co., Pa.
Severson, Leslie F, age 14; Co. A, 15th Iowa; residence when enlisted, unknown.
Ward, William, age 24; Co. G, 117th N. Y.; residence when enlisted, Oneida Co., N. Y.
Wright, James R., age 32; Co. K, 21st Mich.; residence when enlisted Michigan.

XXXVIIIth CONGRESS—Second Session.

SENATE....WASHINGTON, Friday, Feb. 10, 1865.

REPORT ON THE WAR.

Mr. ANTHONY from the Committee on Printing, recommended that five thousand copies of the report of the Committee on the conduct of the war, in relation to the Petersburg mine explosion, be printed. Adopted.

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.

Mr. SUMNER, from the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses in the bill to establish a Bureau of Freedmen's Affairs, reported the substitute agreed upon by said Committee, which was ordered upon the table until to-morrow.

THE ELECTORAL VOTE.

A message from the President in relation to the exclusion of the votes of certain States from the Electoral College, was received and read.

The communication was published in yesterday's House proceedings.

Mr. JOHNSON took issue with the President in his implied assertion that Congress had no right to legislate in the exclusion of votes from the Electoral College, and that the joint resolutions ought to have been either approved or disapproved by the President.

A communication from the President in relation to the presentation of a sword to Capt. Stillwagen, as a mark of gratitude for his services to the British brigantine Mersey, was received and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

THE SAVANNAH COTTON.

Mr. WILSON offered a resolution instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the expediency of appropriating the cotton captured at Savannah for the manufacture of tents, &c. for the army, which was objected to.

DEFAULTERS.

Mr. TRUMBULL called up the bill to facilitate the collection of certain debts due the United States, which authorizes the issue of a warrant of attachment against the property of defaulting postmasters, mail contractors and other officers, agents or employés of the Post-office Department, where such defaulters have countenanced, aided or abetted the Rebellion. The bill was passed.

EXECUTIVE APPROPRIATION.

The unfinished business of yesterday, which was the Legislative, Judicial and and Executive Appropriation bill, was taken up at 1 o'clock.

A discussion arose on the item of appropriation for the Printing bureau of the Treasury Department, and the expediency or inexpediency of continuing the hydrostatic process of printing Treasury Notes.

At the suggestion of Mr. Clark, a letter from Mr. Chase to the present head of the printing bureau, congratulating him upon the success of the hydrostatic process of printing, was read.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

Mr. SUMNER asked that the bill before the Senate be laid aside, and that the President's communication concerning the late peace conference be read.

It was so ordered, and the President's message was read; after which Mr. SAULSBURY said: Regarding that message as the most important ever transmitted by the President of the United States, I move that it be referred to a select committee of five members of this body, and that they have leave to report at any time.

Mr. SUMNER—I think it will be enough if we order it to be printed. I move that it be printed and ordered to lie on the table.

This motion prevailed.

Mr. SAULSBURY—Does the Chair decide my motion out of order?

Mr. FOSTER (in the chair)—The Chair does not so decide; but the motion to lay on the table takes the precedence of it.

Mr. SAULSBURY—Well, I wish to give notice that I will renew my motion at another time.

APPROPRIATIONS AGAIN.

The Senate resumed the consideration of the Appropriation Bill.

Mr. SHERMAN moved that the Deficiency bill, about which there had been so much controversy between the two Houses, be added to the Appropriation bill as a new section. He explained that the section in dispute had been stricken out of the Deficiency bill. It related to the appropriation of $3,800 for extra compensation to the employés of the House.

Mr. CLARK from the Conference Committee on the Deficiency bill, reported that the Committee had been unable to agree, and moved that the Senate insist on its amendment to strike out the provision for extra compensation. Mr. Clark charged that the House refused to pass the bill because the Senate would not agree to an appropriation that was contrary to law.

The Senate agreed to Mr. Clark's motion and insisted on its amendment to the Deficiency Bill.

Mr. SUMNER raised the question whether the Deficiency Bill could originate in the Senate. He did not think it could.

Mr. SHERMAN said the Senate had no alternative but to yield a point against their conscience and their views of right and law, or to get the Deficiency Bill through in the form he had suggested. The War Department needed money, and the transportation of soldiers to the scene of active operations in the field had been delayed by this action of the House in insisting upon an appropriation that was contrary to law. The deficiency must be provided for before the adjournment of Congress, or an extra session would have to be called. He thought the mode he had suggested the best way to make up the deficiency.

Mr. WILSON—Mr. President: Congress presents a spectacle to the country. We owe to the armies of the United States millions of dollars. Many of them have not been paid for months. Many of them have put into the hands of their commanding officers their resignations, and are imploring the Government to accept them for the reason that their families are suffering at home, while they are not paid even what the Government owes them. This is the condition of our armies. This is the condition of the families of our soldiers and officers. We have not paid them, and we have not the means to do it—at any rate, as rapidly as we ought to do it.

Mr. SHERMAN—The Senator from Massachusetts, from the high position occupied by him, may give the country a very erroneous idea. There is no deficiency in the appropriation for the pay department. There is ample provision for the current year.

Mr. WILSON—There is a deficiency in money, and I am talking about money, and not about appropriations. I was speaking of the want of means to carry out the law and pay our soldiers what we have agreed to pay them. I say we want tens of millions of dollars for that purpose now; and when the nation is struggling for the means to carry itself through this Rebellion, we have an issue here made in Congress to increase the compensation twenty per cent of a class of men that deserve it less than any other men in the service of the Government of the United States. There are women working in this City for $50 and $700 a year, and asking for an increase of compensation, and you refuse them. Why? Because you have not the means to do it. You need more money than you can obtain to pay your just debts—to pay what you have agreed to pay. And, sir, in the face of the fact that you owe tens of millions of dollars to our Armies, and that many of our officers have been unpaid for months; in face of the fact that officers of our Armies are sending in their resignations—and some of our Generals hold them by the handfull—asking to resign that they may take care of their families; in face of these facts that we cannot help and cannot relieve, owing to the financial condition of our country, we have an issue raised here in Congress by one branch of this Government, in violation of the laws of the country, to increase the compensation of their clerks and the persons they employ twenty per cent! It is utterly and wholly indefensible. I do not shrink from a contest with them on that question. I court a contest here and before the country, if they choose to make it. I say here, the fact as it stands before us and before the country, is not creditable to the Congress of the United States. And I hope the Senate will stand firm and put this Deficiency bill as suggested by the Chairman of the Committee on Finance, to this Appropriation bill. If gentlemen anywhere choose to make an issue before the country, when we have not the means to increase the compensation of men who do not receive enough now to support their wives and children at home, while they are suffering and fighting and bleeding and dying for the country; if gentlemen choose to make an issue on the increase of compensation to well-paid men who are employed about ten months in two years, why let them make it; I welcome the contest.

Mr. SHERMAN further explained that the House refused to appropriate money to pay what was due to the Army because the Senate would not agree to increase the compensation of the employés of the House.

A discussion on the right of the Senate to originate appropriation bills was entered into by Messrs Sumner, Foster and Johnson.

The amendment was adopted. So the Deficiency Bill was added to the