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WASHINGTON.

Highly Important Proceedings of Congress.

Message from President Johnson on the Condition of the Southern States.

Reports on the Same Subject by Generals Grant and Schurz.

The President Represents Flattering Progress in the Work of Reconstruction.

General Grant Believes in the Good Faith of the Southern People.

Their Early Restoration to Full Citizenship Advocated.

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Adoption by the House of an Amendment to the Constitution Prohibiting the Payment of Any Portion of the Rebel Debt.

Stringent Propositions of the Radicals for the Reconstruction of the Southern States.

&c. &c. &c.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19, 1865.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S MESSAGE TO THE SENATE ON THE CONDITION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

The predominant feature in to-day's Senatorial session was the unmistakeable appearance of the cloven foot of the radical element, immediately following the reading of President Johnson's message upon the status of the Southern States, and the accompanying report upon the same subject of General Grant and Carl Shurz. It was evident upon the conclusion of the reading of Gen. Grant's report that Senator Sumner had listened to the simple and dignified expressions of opinion regarding the good faith and honesty of intent of the Southern people with impatient disbelief, and his vehement and unmanneely endeavor to wrest the possession of the floor from Senator Wade, who was first recognized by the Chair, indicated how profoundly the depths of Massachusetts fanaticism had been stirred by the simple reading of the articles of administration orthodoxy. Mr. Sumner lastily called for the immediate reading of Carl Schurz's report, and the objection raised thereto on account of its great length had the effect of entirely upsetting the Senator's amiability. With dramatic bitterness he reverted to the hour when the distressing affairs of "bleeding Kansas" were brought before that body in a report of similar length and accompanied by a message of Franklin Pierce, which, like the executive document to which they had just listened, was an evident whitewashing of existing outrages that the Senate had listened to with patient attention. Thereupon Senator Johnson, of Maryland, withdrew his objections, with a mild rebuke directed at Sumner for his characterization of the President Johnson Message. The reading had not proceeded more than ten minutes before a motion to defer its consideration until printed with the accompanying documents checked Mr. Sumner's affectation of extreme enjoyment in the contents, and gave Senators Doolittle and Dixon an opportunity they were not slow to avail themselves of lecturing in round terms the unguarded expression of the Christian reformer. This called forth a sarcastic rejoinder from the latter gentleman, to the effect that he was deeply sorry that he had grieved the Senators aforesaid by claiming for the President's Message a whitewashing tendency; and he closed with the impenitent assertion, delivered with a lachrymose intonation, that "he had nothing to qualify, nothing to modify, nothing to retract." As Senator Trumbull objected decidedly to the spirit and tenor of this dissension, and threatened a movement to adjourn, Sumner escaped without further rebuke; but among all parties, both on the floor and in the galleries, the pettish and involuntary exclamation of the Senator is regarded as the premature disclosure of the positive hostility that is known to be arraying against the administration and his revolutionary lead.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION PROHIBITING PAYMENT OF ANY OF THE REBEL DEBT.

A proposed amendment to the constitution was easily carried in the house by a two-thirds vote. The Chairman of the Judiciary Committee reported a bill to prevent the assessment of any body whomsoever to pay debts contracted for the support of the rebellion. A long debate ensued on the proposed amendment, some republican members insisting that it was not strong enough, others that it was too sweeping, and still others that it was just right. Mr. Rogers, of the lately reconstructed State of New Jersey, made forcible protest against so many amendments of the constitution, and hinted that it was improper to prevent any class of people from paying any debts they please. However, the rebel debt, or any debt contracted under the confederacy, is a stench in the nostrils of the House, democrats as well as republicans; and they propose to cut off all probabilities of its assumption.

THE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

The bill introduced by Representative Ashley, of Ohio, to reconstruct the Southern States is more stringent in its provisions than any for a similar object heretofore presented. It provides for the appointment of provisional governors, with the marshals and district attorneys for the temporary discharge of civil duties. The inhabitants of each State, irrespective of race or color, are to be enrolled. If a majority take the oath to support the constitution of the United States the Governor shall by proclamation invite the loyal people to elect delegates to a convention to re-establish a State government. The delegates are required to take and subscribe to the oath of allegiance, and no person can thus serve or vote who has held or exercised any civil or military office under the rebel usurpation, or voluntarily borne arms against the United States. Both the oath to support the constitution of the United States and the oath of allegiance are to be administered to voters. The constitution formed must be republican, and not repugnat to the constitution of the United States and Declaration of Independence, and it must provide that involuntary servitude is forever prohibited; that no confederate, State, or municipal debt shall ever be recognized or paid; that perfect toleration of religion shall be secured, and no inhabitant shall ever be molested in person or property on account of his or her mode of religious worship; and that no person shall enter upon any office within the gift of the people until he shall have first taken the oath to support the constitution of the United States, and an oath to maintain the perpetual union of these States. This covenant is to be perpetual. If the constitution shall come up to these and other requirements, a copy shall be sent to the President of the United States, who, after obtaining the consent of Congress, shall by proclamation recognize the government so established. This act is not to operate as a recognition of a State government in the State of Tennessee till the conditions aforesaid are complied with; and till that time Tennessee and all the States recently in rebellion shall be subject to this law.

INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE STATES.

Mr. Washburne, from the Committee on Commerce, reported back a bill to facilitate intercourse between the States. This is the same bill which passed the House twice last session, and which was talked down in the Senate in the last hours by personal friends of the four component lines to New York. It aroused debate, as it was expected to do. Mr. John L. Thomas, Sr., of the Baltimore and Ohio road, and Mr. Rogers, for the Camden and Amboy route, inveighed against its passage, as in duty bound—the refreshing part of the spectacle of the member from New Jersey being his contending for what he termed the sacred privileges of the Camden and Amboy Railroad Company and the rights of our new sister in the galaxy of States. By common consent in this debate the speakers against Mr. Washburne were all recognized as talkers for their respective railroads, though they disclaimed any such connection. The bill passed, and it only remains for the Senate to endorse it. Sufficient time being given them they will probably do so.

THE HOLIDAY RECESS.

The Senate has amended the House resolution for a long recess about holiday time. The Senate amends to adjourn from the 21st inst. to the 3d proximo. The House refused to concur, and a special committee is to be appointed to labor with the Senate for a change of opinion. The sentiment of the House is in favor of an adjournment to the 9th, and they will probably prevail over the Senate and secure the long adjournment.

RATIFICATION BY CALIFORNIA OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY AMENDMENT.

The Secretary of State has received a telegram of the 18th instant, from the Governor of California, representing that the Legislature of that State had ratified the proposed amendment to the United States constitution abolishing slavery.

COLLECTIONS IN AID OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.

A note from S. N. Clark, Lieutenant and Acting Aide-Camp, of the Bureau of Refugees and Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, says:—

As there seems to be some misapprehension with regard to the mission of Mrs. Josephine S. Griffing, the Commissioner directs me to say that she was discharged as an agent of this Bureau, November 7, 1865. The Bureau has not received any funds from Mrs. Griffing, and does not assume the responsibility of the collections she is making. The number of actual dependants upon the government for support through this Bureau in Washington is between three and four hundred. Many are poor, but have managed thus far to take care of themselves, receiving now and then, temporary relief.

THIRTY-NINTH CONGRESS.

First Session.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18, 1865.

DEFENCE OF THE NORTHEASTERN FRONTIER.

Mr. MORRILL, (rep.) of Me., introduced a bill to provide for the defence of the Northeastern frontier, which provides for the repayment to Maine of appropriations for the construction of the European and North American Railway. The bill was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

UNIFORM MILITIA THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. WILSON, (rep.) of Mass., introduced a bill the more effectually to provide for the national defence by establishing a uniform militia throughout the United States. It is his bill of February last, organizing the general militia system and providing a military bureau of the government. The bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU—RESTORATION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

Mr. DOOLITTLE, (rep.) of Wis., introduced a bill in relation to the Freedmen's Bureau, which authorizes the President to extend and maintain a branch of that bureau in any State in which slaves have been emancipated by the operations of the war or the amendments of the constitution, and authorizes him to suspend its operation in or withdraw the military forces from the States in which he is satisfied that hostilities have ceased, the insurrection been suppressed, peace and order restored and the civil authority established, and the laws so modified as to procure equal protection to all persons in all their civil rights, without distinction of race or color, including the right to make contracts, sue and be sued, appear as witnesses, buy or sell real or personal estate, and all the rights of property and personal liberty.

The bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

COAL LANDS.

Mr. CONESS, (rep.) of Cal., introduced a bill to amend an act for the disposal of coal lands and town property, which allows the right to enter one hundred and sixty acres of coal lands to any person actually engaged in coal mining upon the premises at the passage of that act, and fixes the price at twenty dollars per acre. A declaratory descriptive statement of such lands and improvements is required to be filed within one year from the passage of this act, and proof and payment within one year thereafter.

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

JURISDICTION OF THE COURT OF CLAIMS.

Mr. WILLEY, (rep.) of W. V., introduced a bill to amend an act to restrict the jurisdiction of the Court of Claims, and to provide for the payment of certain claims for quartermasters' stores, passed July 4, 1864, by striking out in the third and fourth sections the words "in States not in rebellion." It was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

Mr. WILSON, (rep.) of Mass., offered the following, which was adopted:—

Resolved, That the Secretary of War be directed to report, for the information of the Senate, what number of men are now in service in the regular army; what number of officers are holding commissions; where such officers are stationed, and what duty they are performing; said report to include the cavalry, artillery and infantry regiments, and to state the number of men, and of officers, in each company, battery and regiment, and what number of enlisted men are actually fit for and performing active service, with their commands or elsewhere.

BILL TO AMEND A PENSION LAW OF THE LAST CONGRESS.

Mr. LANE, (rep.) of Ind., from the Committee on Pensions, reported a bill to amend a pension law of last winter, so as to include those who have lost both feet in the naval service among those entitled to twenty dollars per month, as already provided for those who have suffered a similar loss in the military service, which was passed.

NAVY REGISTER.

Mr. ANTHONY, (rep.) of R. I., reported from the Committee on Foreign Printing a resolution for the printing of three thousand copies of the Navy Register.

Mr. GRIMES, (rep.) of Iowa, asked what was the necessity of printing so many as three thousand for the use of the Senators. Until within the last three years Senators had never received more than one copy each. He moved to strike out three thousand and insert one thousand five hundred, which was adopted.

The resolution was then adopted.

THE BONDS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC PRINTING.

Mr. ANTHONY introduced a joint resolution to increase the bonds of the Superintendent of Public Printing from $40,000 to $80,000. Mr. Anthony explained that under the law the Superintendent of Public Printing could have but two-thirds of the amount of his bond under his control at any one time. The business of the Public Printing Office was increasing so rapidly that it was necessary to have a larger amount of money at the disposal of the Superintendent than there could be while the bond was $40,000.

The resolution was adopted.

THE HOLIDAY ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. ANTHONY called up the House resolution for the adjournment of Congress from Wednesday next to January 9, 1866, and moved to amend it by striking out Wednesday and inserting Thursday, and striking out January 9 and inserting January 3, 1866.

Mr. HENDRICKS, (dem.) of Ind., moved to amend the amendment by striking out January 3 and inserting January 5, 1866, upon which Mr. FESSENDEN called the yeas and nays.

The motion was negatived by yeas 13, nays 28.

The resolution was then adopted as amended by Mr. Anthony.

ENLARGING THE POWERS OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.

Mr. TRUMBULL, (rep.) of Ill., gave notice of a bill to enlarge the powers of the Freedmen's Bureau, so as to secure freedom to every person within the limits of the United States, and protect every individual in the full enjoyment of the rights of person and property and furnish him the means of their vindication.

Mr. TRUMBULL said—In giving this notice I desire to say that is given in view of the adoption of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. Whatever diversity of opinion there may be as to the actual adoption of the amendment at this time, in consequence of the abnormal condition of some of the Legislatures which have ratified it, there can be no doubt that it will soon, and probably before action could be had in Congress, have the sanction of a sufficient number of States to put its adoption beyond cavil. I have never doubted that under the second section of the amendment it would be competent for Congress to protect every person within the United States in all the rights of person and property belonging to a free citizen. And to secure those rights is the object of the bill I propose to introduce. I think it important that action should be taken on this subject at an early day, both for the purpose of quieting apprehension in the minds of the many friends of freedom, est by local legislation or a prevailing public sentiment in some of the States persons of the African race should continue to be oppressed, and, in fact, deprived of true freedom; and for the purpose of showing to those among whom slavery has heretofore existed that unless they, by local legislation, provide for the real freedom of their former slaves the federal government will, by virtue of its own authority, see that they are fully protected.

GENERAL OFFICERS IN THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.

Mr. WILSON introduced a resolution calling upon the Secretary of War for information as to the number of major and brigadier generals in the volunteer service, how and where employed, &c., which was adopted.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RECONSTRUCTION.

Mr. ANTHONY moved that the Chair appoint the Special Committee on Reconstruction provided for by a recent resolution, which was adopted.

PAPERS RELATING TO THE SOUTHERN MEMBERS.

Mr. ANTHONY offered a resolution that, until otherwise ordered, all papers relating to the question of representation of the States lately in rebellion be referred to the special committee of fifteen.

Mr. COWAN, (rep.) of Pa., objected to the present consideration of the above, and it went over under the rules.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—CONDITION OF THE STATES LATELY IN REBELLION.

Mr. COWAN said a message had just been received from the President in response to a resolution calling for information as to the condition of the States lately in rebellion. He called for the reading of the message.

The message of the President was read, as follows:—

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES:—

In reply to the resolution adopted by the Senate on the 12th I have the honor to state that the rebellion waged by a portion of the people against the properly constituted authorities of the government of the United States has been suppressed; that the United States are in possession of every State in which the insurrection existed, and that, as far as could be done, the courts of the United States have been restored, post offices re-established, and steps taken to put into effective operation the revenue laws of the country. As the result of the measures instituted by the Executive with the view of inducing a resumption of the functions of the States comprehended in the inquiry of the Senate, the people in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Tennessee have recognized their respective State governments, and are yielding obedience to the laws and government of the United States with more willingness and greater promptitude than under the circumstances could reasonably have been anticipated. The proposed amendment to the constitution, providing for the abolition of slavery forever within the limits of the country, has been ratified by each one of these States, with the exception of Mississippi, from which no official information has been received; and in nearly all of them measures have been adopted, or are now pending, to confer upon the freedmen the privileges which are essential to their comfort, protection and security. In Florida and Texas the people are making considerable progress in restoring their State governments, and no doubt is entertained that they will, at a very early period, be in a condition to resume all their practical relations with the federal government.

In that portion of the Union lately in rebellion the aspect of affairs is more promising than, in view of all the circumstances, could well have been expected. The people throughout the entire South evince a laudable desire to renew their allegiance to the government and to repair the devastations of war by a prompt and cheerful return to peaceful pursuits. An abiding faith is entertained that their actions will conform to their professions, and that in acknowledging the supremacy of the constitution and the laws of the United States their loyalty will be unreservedly given to the government whose leniency they cannot fail to appreciate, and whose fostering care will soon restore them to a condition of prosperity. It is true that in some of the States the demoralizing effects of the war are to be seen in occasional disorders; but these are local in character, not frequent in occurrence, and are rapidly disappearing as the authority of the civil power is extended and sustained. Perplexing questions were naturally to be expected from the great and sudden change in the relations between the two races; but systems are gradually developing themselves under which the freedman will receive the protection to which he is justly entitled, and by means of his labor make himself a useful and independent member of the community in which he has his home.

From all the information in my possession, and from that which I recently derived from the most reliable authority, I am induced to cherish the belief that sectional animosity is surely and rapidly merging itself into a spirit of nationality, and that representation connected with a properly adjusted system of taxation will result in a harmonious restoration of the relations of the States to the national Union.

The report of Carl Shurz is herewith transmitted, as requested by the Senate. No report from the Hon. John Covode has been received by the President. The attention of the Senate is invited to the accompanying report of Lieutenant General Grant, who recently made a tour of inspection through several of the States whose inhabitants participated in the rebellion.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 18, 1865.

Mr. COWAN then called for the reading of a report made to the President by General Grant concerning his late visit in the South.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GRANT'S REPORT.

General Grant's report was read, as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, Dec. 18, 1865.

To his Excellency A. JOHNSON, President of the United States:—

SIR—I reply to your note of the 16th inst., requesting a report from me giving such information as may be possessed of coming within the scope of the inquiries made by the Senate of the United States in their resolution of the 12th inst. I have the honor to submit the following, with your approval and also that of the honorable Secretary of War:—

I left Washington city on the 27th of last month for the purpose of making a tour of inspection throughout some of the Southern States lately in rebellion and to see what changes were necessary in the disposition of the military forces of the country, how these forces could be reduced and expenses curtailed, &c., and to learn as far as possible the feelings and intentions of the citizens of these States towards the general government. The State of Virginia being so accessible to Washington city, and information from this quarter therefore being readily obtained, I hastened through the State without conversing or meeting with any of its citizens. In Raleigh, N. C., I spent one day; in Charleston, S. C., two days, and in Savannah and Augusta, Ga., each one day. Both in travelling and while stopping I saw much and conversed freely with the citizens of those States, as well as with officers of the army who have been stationed among them.

The following are the conclusions come to by me:—I am satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith. The questions which have hitherto divided the sentiments of the people of the two sections—slavery and State rights, or the right of a State to secede from the Union—they regard as having been settled forever by the highest tribunal—arms—that man can resort to. I was pleased to learn from the leading men whom I met that they not only accepted the decision arrived at as final, but now the smoke of battle has cleared away and time has been given for reflection, that this decision has been a fortunate one for the whole country, they receiving the like benefits from it with those who opposed them in the field and in the council. Four years of war, during which law was executed only at the point of the bayonet throughout the States in rebellion, have left the people possibly in a condition not to yield that ready obedience to civil authority the American people have generally been in the habit of yielding. This would render the presence of small garrisons throughout those States necessary until such time as labor returns to its proper channel and civil authority is fully established. I did not meet any one, either those holding places under the government or citizens of the Southern States, who thought it practicable to withdraw the military from the South at present. The white and the black mutually require the protection of the general government. There is such universal acquiescence in the authority of the general government throughout the portions of the country visited by me that the mere presence of a military force, without regard to numbers, is sufficient to maintain order. The good of the country requires that the force kept in the interior, where there are many freedmen (elsewhere in the Southern States than at forts upon the sea coast no force is necessary), should all be white troops. The reasons for this are obvious, without mentioning many of them. The presence of black troops, lately slaves, demoralizes labor both by their advice, and furnishing in their camps a resort for the freedmen for long distances around. White troops generally excite no opposition, and therefore a small number of them can maintain order in a given district. Colored troops must be kept in bodies sufficient to defend themselves. It is not the thinking men who would do violence towards any class of troops sent among them by the general government; but the ignorant in some places might; and the late slave, too, who might be imbued with the idea that the property of his late master should by right belong to him, at least should have no protection from the colored soldier. There is danger of collision being brought on by such causes. My observations lead me to the conclusion that the citizens of the Southern States are anxious to return to self-government within the Union as soon as possible; that while reconstructing they want and require protection from the government; that, they think, is required by the government and is not humiliating to them as citizens; and that if such a course were pointed out they would pursue it in good faith. It is to be regretted that there cannot be a greater commingling at this time between the citizens of the two sections, and particularly of those entrusted with the lawmaking power.

I did not give the operations of the Freedmen's Bureau that attention I would have done it more time had been at my disposal. Conversations, however, on the subject with officers connected with the Bureau led me to think that in some of the States its affairs have not been conducted with good judgment or economy, and that the belief widely spread among the freedmen of the Southern States that the lands of their former owners will, at least in part, be divided among them, has come from the agents of this Bureau. This belief is seriously interfering with the willingness of the freedmen to make contracts for the coming year. In some form the Freedmen's Bureau is an absolute necessity until civil law is established and enforced, securing to the freedmen their rights and full protection. At present, however, it is independent of the military establishment of the country and seems to be operated by the different agents of the Bureau according to their individual notions. Everywhere General Howard, the able head of the Bureau, made friends by the just and fair instructions and advice he gave. But the complaint in South Carolina was that when he left things went on as before. Many, perhaps the majority, of the agents of the Freedmen's Bureau advise the freedmen that by their own industry they must expect to live. To this end they endeavor to secure employment for them, and to see that both contracting parties comply with their engagements. In some cases, I am sorry to say, the freedman's mind does not seem to be disabused of the idea that the freedman has the right to live without care or provision for the future. The effect of the belief in the division of lands is idleness and accumulation in camps, towns and cities. In such cases I think it will be found that vice and disease will tend to the extermination or great destruction of the colored race. It cannot be expected that the opinions held by men at the South for years can be changed in a day. And, therefore, the freedmen require for a few years not only laws to protect them, but the fostering care of those who will give them good council and on whom they can rely. The Freedmen's Bureau being separated from the military establishment of the country requires all the expense of a separate organization. One does not necessarily know what the other is doing or what orders they are acting under. It seems to me this could be corrected by regarding every officer on duty with troops in the Southern States as agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, and then have all orders from the head of the Bureau sent through the department commanders. This would create a responsibility that would cause uniformity of action throughout the South, would cause the orders and instructions from the head of the Bureau being carried out, and would relieve from duty and pay a large number of employes of the government.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant, U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant General.

CALL OF CARL SCHURZ'S REPORT.

Mr. SUMNER, (rep.) of Mass.—I wish to make one remark with reference to the business before the Senate. I wish to know whether the report of Major General Carl Schurz is annexed to the Message of the President?

Mr. FOSTER (in the chair)—The Chair understands that it is.

Mr. SUMNER—Then I think it had better be read.

SEVERAL SENATORS—It is too long.

Mr. SUMNER—At any rate we can begin it. It is a very important document. The Senate will remember that when the report was made out on the condition of affairs in Kansas, every word was read at that desk. Now the question involved is much more important. We have a message from the President, which is like the whitewashing message of Franklin Pierce, with regard to the atrocities in Kansas. I think the Senate had better listen to the report of General Schurz on this important subject.

Mr. JOHNSON, (dem.) of Md., said he was surprised to hear the Senator from Massachusetts characterize the Message as an attempt to whitewash. There was no whitewashing about it. It was a fair and clear statement of facts called for by the Senate. He thought the report of General Schurz had better be printed, together with the other documents.

The reading of General Schurz's report was commenced; but the Clerk had not proceeded far when

Mr. SHERMAN, (rep.) of Ohio, moved that the further reading be dispensed with, and that the report be printed.

Mr. SUMNER—I shall not object to that if the Senator from Ohio thinks that it is proper we should on this important occasion dispense with the reading. I think the Senate could not listen to anything of more importance than that accurate and authentic report regarding the actual condition of things in these States. Here is an eminent citizen, lately a major general in the army of the United States, sent on a special mission by the President to visit these States and report upon their condition. He has made his visit, not hasty, like General Grant, for instance, or some other officers or citizens, but a visit occupying time and extending through the different States, and he has recorded the results in an elaborate document. Now, sir, if the question were a trivial one, if it were a transitory question, I would think with the Senator form Ohio that it had better not be read. If the Senator insists upon his motion, I shall not object.

Mr. SHERMAN had no doubt that the report of General Schurz was elaborate, able and interesting. He would much prefer to read it, however, than hear it read where there was confusion and noise as in the Senate chamber. He would say also, that it was unusual to read such documents. No document was usually read to the Senate except the message of the President of the United States. Even the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, full of information of paramount importance to the country, giving views affecting the great financial interests of the country was not read, but ordered to be printed. If the practice of reading all documents sent to the Senate were to prevail, there would be no time for business.

Mr. DOOLITTLE—The Senator from Massachusetts gave expression to one remark, which brought, it seems to me, injustice to himself, and which he ought to qualify, if not altogether to retract. Speaking of this message just received from the President, he said it was like the whitewashing message of Franklin Pierce to cover up the transactions in Kansas; and that the affairs in these States sought to be covered up and whitewashed by the message of the President, were much worse than those affairs in Kansas. Now, Mr. President, I think the Senator from Massachusetts must have let fall that expression without giving it sufficient thought. I cannot believe that that Senator, occupying the high position he does, representing the great State he does, wishes to be understood as stating here in the Senate and to the country that this message just received from the President is a whitewashing message, seeking to cover up or conceal certain transactions—a state of things infinitely worse than the transactions in Kansas. That terrible affair, which was the beginning of all our troubles, was a civil war itself—the prelude to the great war from which we have just emerged. I believe, sir, that the honorable Senator from Massachusetts will at least qualify, if he does not wholly retract, this strong expression.

Mr. SUMNER—I have nothing to qualify, nothing to modify, nothing to retract. In former days there was but one Kansas to suffer under illegal power; now there are eleven Kansases suffering only as one suffered. Therefore, sir, as eleven are more than one, so is the enormity of the present time more than the enormity of the days of Franklin Pierce.

Mr. DIXON, (rep.) of Conn.—The Senator from Massachusetts says the enormities in the States lately in rebellion are greater than were those of Kansas in former days. I beg leave to remind that Senator that that is not precisely the question raised by the Senator from Wisconsin. There is no question here as to the misconduct of anybody in Kansas or in the Southern States. The charge has been directly made in the Senate that the President of the United States has sent in a whitewashed report with regard to these enormities. Now, sir, I cannot pass that in silence. What is a whitewashed report? It is a report intended to cover up, by falsehood and misstatements, certain facts. That is a whitewashed report. Now, sir, as a friend of the President (and I express no exclusive or peculiar friendship for him), I cannot sit quietly and listen in silence to such charges. I sustain the policy of the President, as I understand it; not because it is the President's policy, but because it is right. I believe in the truth of the statement he has made, and, although he needs no defence, I cannot suffer such charges to go to the country without a protest.

Mr. DOOLITTLE—Whether the President's policy be right or not the charge of the Senator from Massachusetts does go to that question at all. If the Senator from Massachusetts differs from him and believes him to be wrong, that is one thing he has a perfect right to do; but, Mr. President, he goes further. He charges upon the President of the United States falsehood in substance by saying his message is a whitewashing report. He charges him with a want of truth—a want of patriotism. What else can we infer from his remarks? It was that which pained me. I was not pained because the honorable Senator differed from the President. I know he differed from the President on this question; but I was very much chagrined to hear that Senator, as I should be to hear any other Senator on the floor of the Senate, question the truth, the integrity and the patriotism of the President, however much he might disagree in opinion. I had supposed that we all, every member of this body, had full faith in the good intentions of the President, in his integrity and his love of truth. If he has specially displayed any character in this struggle it is that unconquerable love of truth, love of country and love of Union which has made him sacrifice and endanger all he had during the struggle in the South, and which has always characterized him as a man. It was not that the honorable Senator questioned the propriety of the policy recommended by him, but because he made use of that remark that it was a "whitewashing message," and intended to cover up infamy. That, I confess, sir, pained me exceedingly, and I was none the less pained that, after having called his attention to it, he should rise and say that he has nothing to modify, nothing to qualify, nothing to retract. I have said all, perhaps more than I ought to have said. I shall not go into any discussion of these matters at the present time.

Mr. SUMNER—I am sorry that I have given pain to my honorable friends. I certainly did not intend to do so. They suggest that the question has been raised as to the policy of the President. I have raised no such question, and have expressed no opinion in regard to it. The Senator from Wisconsin dwells on that point, and reminds the Senate that the policy of the President was not in question. I knew it was not in question, and therefore expressed no opinion on it; for when I speak in this body, I try to speak directly to the question. There was no question directly before the Senate. Had there been I should have been ready to meet it. The only question was on the character of the document read, and that I characterized as a "whitewashing document." My honorable friends rose one after another, and, like two lexicographers, proceeded to give a definition of the word "whitewash." I do not accept their definition. I intended no such meaning as either the Senator from Connecticut or the Senator from Wisconsin has attempted to give. I have no reflection to make on the patriotism or truth of the President of the United States. Never in public or in private have I made any such reflection, and do not begin now. When I spoke, I spoke of a document that had been read at the desk, and I characterized it as I thought it ought to be characterized. My memory goes back in this chamber further than that of many I see about me. I remember that other scene when a whitewashing message did come into this body from Franklin Pierce. We all at that time called it a whitewashing report, and I am not aware that any one then on the other side understood what my honorable friends from Wisconsin and from Connecticut have undertook to do to-day. We all felt then that Mr. Pierce's message was a whitewashing document. I simply understood to-day, after hearing the document read at the desk, to characterize it as the patriotic party of 1856 characterized the message of Franklin Pierce.

Mr. DIXON—I am glad to hear the disclaimer now made by the Senator from Massachusetts, although he declared he had no explanation to make, nothing to retract. He now says he did not use the word in the sense in which it is always understood. Very well; if he thinks the word "whitewashing" a proper term to apply to the message of the President, and means nothing by it, I am content to allow him to give his own definition. I had understood the word to mean what it has been dictated, and what the common sense of most men understand by it. But as the Senator is skilled in lexicography I will not object to his applying his own definition to the term generally considered so offensive.

Mr. TRUMBULL rose to ask that this debate cease. It was not in their province to criticise or remark upon the expressions of opinion which Senators thought proper to indulge in. But it did seem to him that a controversy had arisen which was not calculated for the public interest or welfare.

The question was then stated by the Chair to be on the motion of Mr. Sherman to print the report of General Schurz, with the other documents, and it was carried.

CALL FOR GENERAL HOWARD'S REPORT.

Mr. WADE, (rep.) of Ohio, presented a resolution calling for the report of General Howard on the condition of the freedmen, which was adopted.

THE PAYERS OF MERCENARIES FROM THE SOUTHERN STATES.

Mr. COWAN rose to withdraw his objection to Mr. Anthony's resolution to refer all papers on the subject of the representation of the States lately in rebellion to the Special Committee of Fifteen, and the Chair stated that, the objection having been withdrawn, the resolution might be considered.

INTERNAL REVENUE TAX AND DUTY ON DOMESTIC MANUFACTURES.

Before the question on this resolution was put the following resolution was offered by Mr. SPRAGUE, (rep.) of R. I., and was agreed to:—

Resolved, The House concurring, that the Committee on Manufactures of the respective houses inquire if the tax of the internal revenue act upon the products of domestic manufacture is greater than the duty, premium on gold and expenses of exchange and transportation upon similar products imported, and if therein the foreign product entered for consumption upon more favorable terms than the domestic product to report by bill or otherwise.

EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Senate then went into executive session and soon after adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19, 1865.

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS OF LOUISIANA AND VIRGINIA MEMBERS.

The SPEAKER laid before the House the credentials of the Louisiana members elect, signed by Governor Wells, and also the certificate of election of B. Johnson Barbour, of Virginia, which were referred to the Committee on Reconstruction.

THE CONTESTED SEAT OF A MISSOURI MEMBER.

Mr. KELSO, (rep.) of Mo., asked of the House further time to take evidence in the contest for his seat, and the subject was referred to the Committee on Elections.

THE CASE OF MR. HARRIS, OF MARYLAND.

Mr. FARNSWORTH, (rep.) of Ill., offered the following:—

Whereas it is alleged that Benjamin G. Harris, a Representative in this House from the Fifth district of Maryland, was, in the month of May last, before a very respectable and intelligent court martial, tried and convicted on the charge and specification to wit:—Violation of the Fifty-sixth article of war; with giving aid and comfort to the public enemy, and inciting them to continue war against the United States, and declaring his sympathy with the enemy, and in opposition to the government of the United States in its efforts to suppress the rebellion; and whereas it was proved at the trial that the said Harris expressed his regret that the assassination of President Lincoln came too late to be of any use to the rebellion, and at the same time declared that Jefferson Davis was a great and good man; all of which acts are inconsistent with the oath taken by him as a member of the House; and whereas the court martial sentenced him, the said Harris, among other things to be forever disqualified from holding all offices of honor, trust or profit under the United States; which sentence was approved by the President; therefore

Resolved, That the Committee on Elections be instructed to inquire into the facts of the case and report the same to this House, together with such action as said committee may recommend; and in making such investigation have power to send for persons and papers.

Mr. ELDRIDGE, (dem.) of Wis., raised the point that this was not a question of privilege.

The SPEAKER thought it was one of the very highest kind.

Mr. FARNSWORTH moved the previous question.

Mr. DAWES, (rep.) of Mass., was of the opinion that the subject should be referred to the Committee on Elections.

Mr. FINCK, (dem.) of Ohio, reminded the House of the fact that Mr. Harris was not now in his seat.

Under the operation of the previous question the preamble and resolution were adopted by a vote of 137 yeas against 21 nays.

THE MILITARY AND NAVAL SCHOOLS.

On motion of Mr. HANKS, (rep.) of Mass., a resolution was adopted instructing the Committees on Military and Naval Affairs to report whether any change in the system of education at the military school at West Point and the Naval Academy at Annapolis is expedient or necessary; and also as to establishing or aiding in the establishment of military and naval schools in each of the several States, in order to provide more effectually for the national defence.

REGULATIONS OF COMMERCE BETWEEN THE STATES.

Mr. WASHBURNE, (rep.) of Ill., said he was instructed by the Committee on Commerce to report the following bill:—

Whereas the constitution of the United States confers on Congress in express terms the power to regulate commerce among the several States; to establish post roads, and to raise and support armies, therefore

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, that every railroad company in the United States whose road is operated by steam, its successors and assigns be and hereby is, authorized to carry upon and over its connections, boats, bridges and ferries, all passengers, troops, government supplies, mails, freight and property, on their way from any State to another State, and to receive compensation therefor.

Mr. O'NEIL, (rep.) of Pa., appealed to Mr. Washburne not to press this bill to a vote, but to refer it to the Committee on the Judiciary. The bill involves many questions of magnitude to the country and also of constitutional law. Let it go over the holidays in order to give full time for examination.

Mr. WASHBURNE replied he was a little surprised the gentleman should distrust the legal ability of the Committee on Commerce. The Judiciary Committee, during the last Congress, reported the bill introduced this morning, word for word, and on the 12th of May, 1864, passed it. He knew of no railroad interest which would control the action of this House. It was a question as to whether Congress has the right to provide free intercourse among the several States. No persons in the President's Message was more approved than this. If the House desired discussion on the bill they must vote down the previous question.

Mr. GARFIELD, (rep.) of Ohio, said he introduced a similar bill early in the last session. It was a plain declaration that Congress has the right to regulate commerce among the States. This was clearly within the scope of Congress. He supposed the House had already sufficient information to enable them to act upon it intelligently, and therefore hoped there would be no postponement.

Mr. JOHN L. THOMAS, (rep.) of Md., did not rise for the purpose of defending any railroad in Maryland or elsewhere. In committee he voted against reporting the bill, for the reason it was not a question proper for the Committee on Commerce, but should be examined by the Committee on the Judiciary, as constitutional questions were involved in it. He had as much right to be heard as any other member. This was a question touching the interests of his own State, and he proposed that the bill be made a special order for the 10th of January.

Mr. ROGERS, (dem.) of N. J., said the main object of the bill was to strike at Maryland and New Jersey. It was to deprive a chartered company of New Jersey of a privilege granted fifty or sixty years ago, for the benefit of another company, by way of the coast. Loyal New Jersey demanded that her rights be respected.

Mr. KELLEY, (rep.) of Pa., asked whether New Jersey came back into the Union with his consent.

Mr. ROGERS replied that the result of the last election was without his consent.

Mr. WASHBURNE said New Jersey and Maryland taxed passengers fifteen or twenty per cent, by which the people had suffered long enough; but what was now proposed was a general law and applicable to all the States. There was nothing in the bill about Maryland and New Jersey.

Mr. ROGERS remarked that the charges made by the gentleman, though not so intended, were untrue, and these he wished to discuss, and place Maryland and New Jersey in their true attitude.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed by a vote of 92 yeas against 52 nays, and then passed.

CONDITION OF THE HARBORS OF THE UNITED STATES.

On motion of Mr. ELIOT, (rep.) of Mass., a resolution was adopted calling on the Secretary of War to communicate to the House the present condition of the harbors of the United States where public works have been built or directed to be built; what appropriation is required for the repairs on the sea coast, lakes and navigable rivers, &c.

COMMITTEE ON MINES AND MINING.

Mr. WASHBURNE, of Ill., from the Select Committee on the Rules, reported a new one for the appointment of a Committee on Mines and Mining, to consist of nine members. This was agreed to.

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