

The Southern Commercial Convention.

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Incidentally the question of absolute Free Trade, the abolition of all Tariffs, and a resort to direct taxation for the support of the general government, has been argued and urged more with a view of operating upon public opinion at large, than of evoking any definite action from the convention.

In regard to the first matter—that of the steamship line from the Chesapeake—the same difficulty presents itself now as heretofore—a difficulty inseparable from the nature of the proposition, and, in the nature of things, inseparable. We pass over the magnitude of the thing—its merely experimental character—the fact that it is still to be seen whether steamers of the size proposed will succeed, and look at the really insuperable obstacle, which consists in the attempt to destroy that competition without which commercial energy cannot exist.

Our own views, in regard to this matter, are too well known to allow of the supposition that by publishing the annexed communication we are to be understood as endorsing its views, farther than by saying that, while the writer differs from us in political opinions, we feel assured that he does not come before the public as a partizan, but in good faith, and therefore is entitled to be heard through our columns.

As for the Pacific Railroad, we think that there are real advantages connected with the southern route which give it a very decided preference over all others; nature and climate have marked it out as the route, and these will, in our opinion, eventually carry the point over Mr. Benton's Buffalo engineering, and Col. Fremont's pup-devouring explorations.

As for the revival of the Slave Trade, that has already been laid on the table by the Convention and need not be further discussed. We have no hard things to say about this. We know good men and wise ones who favour it, but they are in a hopeless minority at the South itself, and, of course, opposed to the views of all "the rest of mankind," so that the idea is not to be regarded as one of practical importance.

If the world would reciprocate in the matter of perfect Free Trade, we would go for it. Unless the world consents to do so, the thing would not be fair. It would be reciprocity all on one side.

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This body has adjourned. Upon the whole, its deliberations have been marked by a more practical character than those of its predecessors. As a merely advisory body, we can look for no immediate results from its action. It is possible that the consciousness of its being merely advisory, gave to the propositions of its members a latitude which the feeling of responsibility attached to the possession of actual power would have gone far to restrain.

It would be well to agree upon the proper kind of Southern School books to be used in Southern Schools. That part of the programme of recommendations we like. It would be well to encourage southern literature, and southern publications, but that is a thing that can neither be resolved nor legislated; still good may come of calling attention to the state of the case. It requires no convention to let us know that our mines and manufactures ought to be developed.

But we are to be understood as saying or thinking that little or no good can spring from these conventions? By no means. On the contrary, southern men are brought together; are made to know each other; when any project may arise, calling for mutual co-operation. A feeling of mutuality is gradually although almost imperceptibly springing up, arising more from this acquaintanceship and contact than from any labored speeches or formal manifestoes.

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So far nothing has been done in either House in the way of business, the whole time since the meeting having been taken up with political discussions, nominally on the President's message, but really because the defeated parties wished to avail themselves of their last opportunity to vent their spleen, and, perhaps, make a little capital. We notice that the Herald seizes upon the expression used some time since by Senator Bigler, of Pa., who said that Mr. Buchanan desired that the citizens of Kansas should settle the future institutions of their State, with or without slavery, to suit themselves.

The Editor of the Fayetteville Carolinian appears to be in a bad way. He has been to the Sampson County Agricultural Fair, and carried home with him a trump of immense size and great ponderosity; but in return he seems to have left behind his heart and gizzard, divided into two hundred and sixty-three general and distinct portions, each minute fragment being in the possession of some fair damsel who is totally unconscious of the great extent and value of her prize.

At the late annual communication of the Grand Lodge of the Masons of North Carolina, the following Grand officers were elected for the ensuing year: Bro. Pleasant A. Holt, of Graham, Grand Master; Bro. James F. Alexander, of Lincoln, Sen'r Warden; Bro. F. M. Cox, of Hartford, Jun'r Warden; Bro. W. D. Hatching, of Raleigh, Treasurer; Bro. William T. Bain, " " Secretary.

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We seldom recollect a more severe blow than that of yesterday (Sunday) morning. It was hard work for even the masculines to get along; how the hooped sex progressed is not for us to say.

But it was not the wind that tore off and carried away a portion of a perfectly new board fence we have recently had put up around a lot on Fourth Street above Princess. We would prefer furnishing the persons who carry off our fences, with wood by the cord for burning purposes, as it would come much cheaper than to supply them with new fences to cook with.

Of course we take it for granted that these things are done by negroes, but their owners had better look out for them, for they could blame nobody for taking rather harsh measures with any colored person caught in the act, and we shall keep a pretty sharp look-out.

We see a paragraph going the rounds of the papers, stating that Col. Cunningham and Dr. Bellinger, who were seconds in the late murderous duel between Taber, of the Charleston Mercury, and Mr. McGrath, are fighting it out again in the Charleston News.

This is an instance of the carelessness of newspapers. Dr. Bellinger was not a second; his communications in reply to Col. Cunningham, all show this; Col. Cunningham's reply to him show the same thing; the same thing was shown by the accounts of the affair published at the time. Dr. Bellinger was present simply as a volunteer, with the avowed purpose of mediating between the parties, if possible.

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From our Raleigh Correspondent.

NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE.

RALEIGH, Dec. 9, 1856. HOUSE OF COMMONS.—The reports from the Western North Carolina Railroad Company and Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company were sent to the Senate, with a proposition to print.

The following resolutions were adopted: Mr. Scott, instructing the Judiciary Committee to enquire into the expediency of abolishing the public execution of criminals. Mr. Lyon, of Granville, a resolution in favor of Joseph Clarke, of Granville county.

The following bills were introduced: Mr. Badham, a bill to regulate the sale of State Bonds. Mr. White, of Bladen, a bill concerning surety and principal. Mr. Little, a bill to charter the town of Rockingham, Richmond county.

Mr. Badham withdrew his resolution regarding the passage of bills asking aid from the State. The following bills and resolutions passed their second reading: The bill concerning fish in Roanoke and Cashie rivers. The bill to repeal 17th section 85th chapter of the Revised Code, concerning pistols.

Mr. Holmes made an able speech in favor of the bill. The bill concerning Chatham and Alamance counties. The resolution in favor of cadets at military schools. The resolution in favor of procuring arms and equipments. The bill preventing the obstruction of fish in the Pedee and other rivers.

The bill incorporating the North Carolina and New York Steamship Company. The following bills and resolutions were rejected after their second reading: A bill to emancipate certain slaves in Sampson county. A resolution in favor of John Buffalo, of Wake county.

The bill incorporating Blackman Lodge was rejected on the ground that there was a general law for that purpose. The rules being suspended, the following bills were finally passed, ordered to be engrossed, and sent to the Senate: The bill to amend the charter of Davidson College.

The resolution to purchase maps for the use of the General Assembly, and the bill to repeal 17th section 85th chapter of the Revised Code, concerning pistols. A message was received from the Governor, with several engrossed bills, which will be noticed on their second reading.

A message was received from the Governor, with the report from the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company, which was sent to the Senate with a proposition to print. The House then adjourned.

RALEIGH, Dec. 10, 1856. SENATE.—On motion of Mr. Cunningham, a resolution was adopted regarding the Treasurer. The bill to lay before the General Assembly a statement of the financial condition of the State, present and prospective.

The following reports were received: Mr. Clarke, from the Committee on Education, on the bill giving the Trustees of the University power to fill present and future vacancies, recommending that it do not pass. Mr. Ramey, from the Committee on Finance, on the bill increasing the pay of members, recommending that it do not pass.

Mr. Ramey introduced a bill to incorporate a Bank at Salisbury. On motion of Mr. Brogden, the bill giving the Trustees of the University power to fill vacancies in their Board, was taken up. Messrs. Coleman and A. G. Jones offered amendments, which were rejected.

A debate ensued, in which Messrs. Cameron and Clarke advocated the bill. Messrs. Ramsey, Hill, Pool, Wiggin and Broden spoke against it. The bill was rejected; yeas 38, nays 58.

Mr. W. H. Thomas offered the following resolution: That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be, and are hereby respectfully requested to use their influence in favor of the establishment, by the government of the United States, of a Naval depot at Beaufort Harbor, in this State.

The following engrossed bills were received from the House of Commons, and read the first time: The bill granting the public lands in Watanga county, to the repairs of the roads, &c. The bill to amend 8th sec. 45th chapter of the Revised Code. The bill concerning the registration of Sheriffs' and Constables' bonds.

The bill establishing the weight of a bushel of wheat, &c. The bill authorizing the Sheriff of Guilford County, to advertise, and put to public auction, the lands, &c. The bill to incorporate Mason County Turnpike Company.

The Senate concurred in a message from the House, proposing to print the reports of several Plank Road Companies. A message from the House, proposing to defer the debate on the bill on city until to-morrow, at 11 o'clock, was received in the Senate.

The Senate then adjourned. HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Mr. Foster offered a resolution in favor of the Rev. Dr. Hawks, L. D., having access to the public library, which was read and the rules suspended to allow its final passage.

On motion of Mr. Caldwell, his bill, incorporating the People's Bank, was made the order of the day for Tuesday next. The following bills and resolutions were introduced: Mr. Hill, of Halifax, a resolution concerning the clerk of the County Court of Halifax. Mr. Bridges, a resolution in favor of Theodore Schneider. Mr. Yancey, a bill to lay off a road in Madison county.

Mr. Clark, a bill to pay witnesses appearing before justices of the peace, &c. The following bills and resolutions were read the third time and passed: The resolution in favor of cadets at military schools, authorizing the Governor to furnish arms, equipments, &c. The bill to prevent the felling of timber on the Enue and Fish rivers. The bill to prohibit any obstruction to the passage of fish in the Pedee and other rivers.

The bill concerning gaming at Faro. The bill to incorporate the North Carolina and New York Steamship Company. The bill to extend the time of registration of Sheriffs' and Constables' bonds. The bill to amend the charter of the Cheek Turnpike Company.

The bill concerning the Common Schools of North Carolina, after some amendments, passed its second reading. The bill to abolish the office of Superintendent of the Common Schools, was taken up. A warm debate ensued. Messrs. Bridges and Erwin opposed the bill, and Mr. Stanton supported it.

On motion of Mr. Jenkins, the bill was indefinitely postponed. The bill for the better securing of costs in suits at law and equity, passed its second reading. The bill to incorporate York Collegiate Institute, passed its second reading. An amendment, empowering it to confer degrees, was rejected. Its powers are confined to granting diplomas only.

A message was received from the Governor, enclosing the Engineer's report of the survey of the Western Railroad, which was sent to the Senate with a proposition to print. The bill to incorporate the town of Salem, being an engrossed bill from the Senate, was read the first time, and the rules being suspended, the bill was read the second and third times.

Mr. Leaves opposed the bill, and Mr. Martin and D. F. Caldwell supported it. Pending the debate, the hour arrived for adjournment. RALEIGH, Dec. 11, 1856.

SENATE.—The following bills were introduced and appropriately referred: Mr. Cherry, a bill to expedite the construction and completion of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal. Mr. A. G. Jones, a bill to amend the Constitution of the State. [This bill exempts free white persons from the payment of capitation tax, and subjects the free persons of color to the payment thereof from the age of twenty-one to sixty years.]

All slaves from their birth to their twelfth year to pay one-half the capitation tax imposed on slaves of twelve years of age and upwards. Mr. Rives, a bill to amend an act for the improvement of Cape Fear River, above Fayetteville. [This bill asks for an appropriation by the State.] Mr. Cherry, a bill authorizing an exchange of lands with the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal Company, and an increase of the capital stock of said company.

The hour of eleven having arrived, the Senate proceeded to vote for five Trustees for the University. [We understand there was no election, none of the candidates having received the requisite number of votes.] The resolution continuing the Historical Agency of the State was read the second and third times and passed.

The following bills were read the third time: The bill fixing the place to which notice of protest should be sent. Rejected. The bill to repeal that portion of the Revised Code relating to fire hunting by night. Passed. The bill to allow the clerk of Craven County

Court more time to make out tax lists, was amended by inserting "and Comptroller" after clerk, and passed. The bill concerning executors and administrators passed.

The following bills passed their third reading: The bill to increase the pay of witnesses in Duplin county. The bill to confer authority on the Commissioners of the town of Tarboro. The bill to authorize the inspectors of naval stores to gauge the article of Spirits of Turpentine.

The bills to amend the charters of the Western Plank Road Company, and the Charlotte and Fayetteville Plank Road Company, were laid on the table. The bill for dividing the State into eight judicial districts, was read the second time, and, after considerable debate, rejected; yeas 14, nays 29.

A communication from the State Comptroller was received and sent to the House, with a proposition to print. The Senate then adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—The report from the Board of Directors of the Deal, Dumb and Bladon system, was sent to the Senate, with a proposition to print. The report of the Committee on Internal Improvement on the Beaufort and Fayetteville Railroad bill, recommended the rejection of several of the sections of the bill, and the substitution of others.

On motion of Mr. Bridges, the bill and amendments were ordered to be printed. The following bills were introduced, read the first time, and appropriately referred: Mr. Outlaw, a bill concerning the competency of corporations as witnesses. Mr. Hackney, a bill to amend the act incorporating the Graham Plank Road Company. Mr. Hall, a bill to establish female normal schools. Mr. Mann, a bill to repeal 34th section 61st chapter Revised Code. Mr. Outlaw, a bill to authorize the Court of Common Pleas of Bertie county to impose tolls in said county.

Mr. Barnes, a bill to lay off and establish a new county by the name of Dobbin. Mr. Foster, a bill to incorporate the Normal College and Thomasville Turnpike-road Co. Mr. Gilliam, a bill to encourage and promote matrimony. [This bill authorizes the Judges of the Supreme and Superior Courts, and all licensed practicing attorneys at law, to solemnize the rites of matrimony under the same laws as ministers of the gospel and justices of the peace.]

Mr. Moore, a bill to amend an act concerning civil process before Justices of the Peace. Mr. Hoke, a bill to amend the 99th section of the 34th chapter of the Revised Code, concerning crimes and punishments.

A message was received from the Senate, concurring in the resolution of the House to enter upon an election for five trustees for the University. The names of thirty-two gentlemen were placed in nomination by the members of the House. The House proceeded to vote by ballot. When the roll was called, the unfinished business of yesterday was taken up, being the bill to incorporate the town of Salem, which passed its third reading. Yeas 95, nays 7.

The resolution in favor of B. H. Stannum was taken up. [It was a claim for compensation for land sold by the State, which had been granted for Revolutionary services, rendered by the ancestor of claimant.] It occasioned a warm debate, which was maintained by Messrs. Hoke, Thompson and Jenkins, in favor of the resolution, and opposed by Messrs. Dorgan and Humphry.

Pending the debate, the House adjourned. RALEIGH, Dec. 12, 1856. SENATE.—Mr. Clarke, from the Committee on Education, reported a bill to provide for the distribution of the literary fund.

A message was received from the House, proposing to raise a joint select committee to whom the claim of B. H. Stannum should be referred. Concurred in. Mr. A. J. Jones offered a resolution authorizing and requesting His Excellency, Governor Brogden, to secure the services of Col. Gwynn to make an examination of the works of the Deep River and Cape Fear Navigation Company, and report the same to the General Assembly at an early day.

The resolution also authorizes the Governor to draw on the public treasury to defray the expenses of said survey. The rules being suspended, the resolution finally passed. Mr. Mills introduced a bill to abolish jury trials in the County Court of Polk County.

At 11 o'clock the bill to establish and lay off a new county by the name of Alleghany was taken up and read. Mr. W. H. Thomas advocated the bill in an appeal for what he considered the rights of the West, and offered an amendment, which was rejected. Mr. Eaton opposed the bill on the ground of the want of the necessary Federal population to constitute a county. Mr. Wilder also opposed the bill. Mr. Bryant, of Ashe, in a feeling appeal, advocated the passage of the bill. The bill was rejected. Yeas 21, nays 25.

Mr. Thomas, of Jackson, moved to reconsider the vote by which the bill laying off the State into eight judicial districts was adopted on yesterday. This produced a protracted debate between Messrs. W. H. Thomas and Pool, pending which Mr. Wilder moved to adjourn, which motion was agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Mr. Bright presented a report from the Committee on the University election, declaring none of the candidates were elected. Report concurred in. The Committee on Corporation and Currency reported majority and minority reports on the bill incorporating the People's Bank, which were ordered to be printed.

Mr. Hall introduced a bill to emancipate William, a slave. Laid on the table. On motion of Mr. Rankin, the resolution in favor of B. H. Stannum was referred to a joint select committee, for further consideration.

The bill to aid in the construction of the Western Railroad was taken up as the order of the day. Mr. Outlaw wished to postpone the debate, if the friends of the bill would consent. Mr. Shepherd, who had vacated the Chair, declined acceding, and requested the opponents of the bill to address the House and give him an opportunity to reply. A pause succeeded, during which a motion by Mr. Leat, to make the Northwestern Railroad the order of the day on Wednesday next, was rejected. Mr. Foster addressed the House in favor of the bill to aid the Western Railroad. It did not cost the State one cent. He was willing to invest his own funds, and entered into a close calculation, to show the great profit that would arise from the transportation of 500,000 tons of coal annually, and made calculations to show the indebtedness of the State would be paid off in 30 years, besides paying a large dividend to stockholders, and this result from cost value, without reference to other sources of revenue. Mr. Gilliam opposed the bill with reluctance. He thought Mr. Foster's calculations would be found erroneous. He thought the results anticipated would never be realized, and, at some length, stated why he should vote against it.

Mr. Shepherd answered Mr. Gilliam's objection, and supported the statement of Mr. Foster, with an array of facts and calculations, based on the experience of the Northern States, which showed how completely he had mastered the subject. His arguments in favor of the road, and the consequent building of a magnificent arsenal, were strongly put. He concluded a speech of nearly two hours by calling on the House to disregard every minor consideration; to act right, and leave the consequences to God and their country. He was followed by Mr. Bledsoe, in opposition to the bill, who was very ably answered by Mr. Meares. Mr. Bledsoe repeated his objection at length. The provisions of the bill, respecting the issuing of bonds, was debated between him and Mr. Meares till near the hour of adjournment, when further debate was postponed until 11 o'clock to-morrow. The House then adjourned.

PROSPECT OF SUFFERING IN LIBERIA.—The Rev. J. Burns, the superintendent of the Methodist missions in Western Africa, writes from Monrovia, under date of October 25th, as follows: There is now a strong probability that the ensuing twelve months will be rather a serious time, though at Liberia for breadstuff. This has been a very hard year, and produce of all kinds has been