EDGEFIELD ADVERTISER.

A Democratic Journal, Devoted to the South and Southern Rights, Politics, Latest News, Literature, Morality, Temperance, Agriculture, &c.

"We will cling to the Pillars of the Temple of our Liberties, and if it must fall, we will Perish amidst the Ruins."

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SPEECH OF MR. TILLMAN.

On several Bills to give the Election of Electors of President and Vice President to the people, delivered in the House of Representatives, December 7 1855.

There seems to be an honest difference of opinion, Mr. Chairman, between the members upon this floor, as to the parties in whom the Constitution of the United States vests the right of electing Presidential Electors. A portion of this House maintain that the right is vested in the Legislature and another portion insist that it was intended by the framers of the Federal Constitution to vest it in the people. For my own part, I believe it is equally constitutional for the legislature to choose Presidential Electors, or for the people to do it, but at the same time, I am one of those, who incline to the opinion, that expediency and sound policy require that the power should be vested in the people and not in the Legislature.

My first proposition is, that the choice of Presidential Electors ought to be given to the people to prevent the corruption of the State Legislatures. If it is right and expedient for South Carolina to elect Presidential Electors by the Legislature, it is equally so, that the Legislatures of all the other States in this Union should do the same thing. It is a bad rule that will not work both ways. And what would be the effect if all the other State Legislatures were to elect Presidental Electors as South Carolina does. The whole number of members of both Houses of the Legislatures in all the thirty-one States of this Union is but 4,316. It would only be necessary to have a majority in each State Legislature to control the vote of the State in the Electoral College; and therefore if we were to divide the whole number of the members of all the Legislatures in this Union by two it would give only 2,158 members and then add two, or even three hundred members more, to secure large and ample majorities in each Legislature, and we would have—say 2,500 men to control the whole vote of the whole Electoral College, in the election of President of the United States.

Now who is the President? You may talk about the power of the Czar of Russia—about the departed glory and magnificence of the Emperor of Rome, but sir, neither of them ever had the power of the President of these United States. I admit, that his powers are restrained. I admit, that he is controlled by constitutional checks, but he, and he alone, regulates the mighty machinery of both our Federal and State governments in all their important actions. No less than 300,000 men hold their commissions as officers, at the will of the President. No less than $85,000,000 are expended and disbursed every year at his dictation, or at least for the two first years of his term, because the very ballot which secures the election of a President, likewise secures the election of a majority in Congress, whom he can control, and whose political sympathies are entirely with him. When backed by these countless offices, with their high honors and fat salaries, together with the numerous other instruments of power, always at the command of a judicious President, there is no doubting the fact, that he can prescribe the legislation of Congress, in a great measure, during his whole term of office, because in addition to these elements of power, he also has that of the veto.

The election of President is in reality the election of all the officers who constitute the federal government, and it likewise controls the disbursement of nearly $400,000,000. Such being the case with all these splendid offices, and all this vast amount of money at his almost absolute command, what would be the effect, if this combined and all powerful influence, were brought to bear, by the skilful hand of such a man as Martin Van Buren, upon 2500 members of the State Legislatures, *previously* elected and allowed to vote for Presidential electors by *secret* ballot, as is now done in South Carolina. The State elections for both branches of the several legislatures in the Union, occur at numerous and irregular periods of the year, and the tenure of office in both branches is likewise greatly diversified. For instance, the members of the House of Representatives in thirteen States hold office for only *one* year while in the other eighteen States, they hold it for two years. Again, Senators in the six New England States, hold their commissions for but one year. In eight of the States, they hold *two* years. In two of the States, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, they hold *three* years, and in all the other fifteen States, they hold for the long period of *four* years. Let it be borne in mind that the time, for holding State elections is generally fixed by the State constitutions, *not* by statute. Let it also be remembered, that Congress can and does prescribe the *time* for choosing Presidential electors, while the States are left to regulate the *manner* only of that election. Let it further be kept in view, that all the members of both branches of the legislature, and particularly the Senators in most of the States, are elected to their offices, generally for weeks, sometimes for months, and occasionally for years, before a Presidential election takes place. Lastly, let it be supposed, that all of the States, were to elect their Presidential electors by their legislatures and by the secret ballot system as we do, and what could be the result but inevitable corruption, so foul, so rank, that it would stink in the nostrils of every honest man.

The gentlemen from St. Johns, Colleton, (Mr. Bryan) declaims loudy against corruption in the other States, where this election has been given to the people, and says that $85,000,000 are a heavy burden for the flesh to carry gracefully. Sir, I concede that it is a burden too heavy for this legislature or for all the legislatures of the American Union to carry *honestly*, but the three million of American freemen and voters can both carry and disburse it safely. I charge no legislature, either of this, or any other State, if that of any other State had the election of Presidential electors, with corruption, but it is a sound maxim of political philosophy, that although no man or set of men may be corrupt, that yet they are all corruptible. If Presidential electors were chosen by the legislature in the other States, a masterly intriguer would need only to control majorities in eight of the State Legislatures, to secure his elevation to the proudest and most powerful office that any man ever filled. Take for example New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, large States which have a joint vote of eighty-five in the electoral college. How many members constitute the legislatures of these States, including both Senators and Representatives? Only 427, a majority of whom would be 215. Take five of the other States, say Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Illinois, which have a joint vote of sixty-three for President, and add the vote of these five States to the three, I have already named and you get a majority of the electoral college which at present is but 295. Now what would be a majority of the legislatures in these eight States, as they are organized at this time? 567 and no more, so that, this small number of men could elect a President, if the legislatures of the States refered to had the election of Presidential electors, as is the case in South Carolina.

It is well for us, that the other States have given this election to the people, while we have forborne to do it; for if they had kept it in the hands of their legislatures, as we have, I verily believe in all sincerity, that the Union would have dissolved long ere this. It must have broken into pieces, from the corruption of the thirty-one eating cancers, which this same thing of electing a President by the State legislatures would have engendered. It is notorious that the election of Presidential electors was given to the people in many of the States to prevent corruption in their legislatures, or at least, this was one of the many arguments used by the friends of reform, as the newspapers of the time, and able speeches yet extant will show. This is especially true of New York, and I challenge denial from any gentleman upon this floor, that the election of electors was there given to the people under the lead of Senator Tallmadge, in consequence of the intrigues of Martin Van Buren with the legislature, to secure the nomination of Mr. Crawford of Georgia. It was, I again repeat, in consequence of his proposals to bribe and corrupt that finally carried the measure through the New York Legislature. I know that it has been frequently alleged in this State, that the election of electors was given to the people in the other States, by the struggles of party for power. This is in some sort true, but the proposition is not fairly stated, since the party or parties who effected the reform in all the other States urged its necessity to prevent corruption in the State legislatures.

One significant fact, which goes to strengthen my assertion that this election was given to the people in the other States, to prevent the patronage and power of the Federal Government from corrupting and operating with undue influence upon the legislatures in the[illegible] most of the [illegible] have numbers of men capable of filling the office, and it is perhaps right that no one man should fill that all controlling office for so long a period as eight years. Previous to giving the election to the people in most of the States, the general rule was to re-elect the President, because of the overwhelming influence which his office gave him over the State legislatures.

My second proposition in support of the bill under consideration, is that the election of electors ought to be given to the people to prevent the election of President from devolving upon the Federal House of Representatives; and I maintain that the other States have given the election to the people in part to prevent the recurrence of such an appalling event. This Union consists of thirty-one States, as sovereign communities, which are so distant from each other; their organizations so separate and distinct; their centres of action so remote; their interests so conflicting; their principles so antagonistic, that there rarely could ever be, at this stage of the Republic, sufficient concert of counsel and action among the legislatures to rally a majority of the electoral college upon any one man. The result therefore in most contests for the Presidency would be, that the election could only be decided by the Federal House of Representatives. As long as Washington lived, he headed a party of his countrymen, to whom his will was law, and hence there never was any formidable opposition to him, or his successor, whom he named. But at the very first election after his death, what a spectacle did the country behold. The election of Presidential electors was then in the hands of the legislatures, which voted for President on different days in nearly every State. The aspirants for Presidential honors intrigued with the leading members of each Legislature, who had *previously* been elected, and the election was thrown into the House. Several days were spent in fruitless ballots, and at last two States, Delaware and South Carolina, appalled at the approach of anarchy, voted *blank*, and Mr. Jefferson was elected. He immediately bestowed high rewards upon those who voted for him in the House, as well as upon those who had controlled the State legislatures. But at the same time, he recommended reform, and the constitution was amended, as to the mode of electing President, and for the last time up to this hour.

Subsequent to 1801, two candidates for the Presidency were generally put forward by Congressional caucuses, so as to co-operate and unite public opinion upon one man by the party in power, and upon another by the party in opposition. This was done evidently to avert the catastrophe of the election being again thrown into the House. Under this system, the election of President glided on smoothly, until the age of peace, as it was called, came on, when four competitors for the Presidency were in the field—Mr. Adams, General Jackson, Mr. Clay and Mr. Crawford. In consequence of Congressional caucuses having fallen into disuse, and the present national convention system being unknown, there was no general concert to elect a President. Wire-pullers were left full scope to intrigue with the Legislatures in such of the States as had not yet given the election of electors to the people, and by voting for *four* candidates the election was again thrown into the House, which became a second time an assembly of electors, instead of legislators. What indescribable scenes were witnessed in the Representative hall, pending this election. Members who were aspirants for office and whose votes might have an important bearing upon their prospects for Executive appointments, met at the hour of midnight, log rolled, urged tempting bids for the votes of influential members, and in their bacchanal orgies over the wine-bottle, the successful and more corrupt party chanted the sentiment, that "those who fell with the first Adams shall rise with the second." Mr. Adams therefore was accordingly elected by a corrupt coalition between himself and Mr. Clay, "either express or implied," and the will of the American people was thus defeated according to the highest contemporaneous authority. Such was the nude mockery of the elective franchise exhibited to the public gaze that the President elect said in his message of acceptance, that but for the absence of constitutional authority, he would decline the appointment and send the election back to the people. The indignation of the people cried aloud for vengeance from one end of the Republic to the other. The great mass of them ever afterwards delighted to punish both Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, while they reveled in the luxury of rewarding Gen. Jackson; and I believe that the latter owed his fast hold upon the affections of the American people during his life, and upon their veneration since his death, more to the corruption which defeated his first election than to any other single cause.

Such was the horror with which the people regarded the election of President by the federal House of Representatives, that another attempt was made, even during the administration of Adams in 1826, to amend the Constitution as to the mode of electing President. No less a man than George McDuffie introduced the bill for that purpose, and it was not only advocated by him, but by Col. Drayton of this State, and a number of others—great and powerful men, both in and out of Congress. Mr. McDuffie's proposed amendment was defeated in Congress, but it has been virtually adopted by all the States in the Union, except ours. They forced, one after another of the legislatures, to give the election of electors to the people, and by a well organized system of county, district, State and national conventions, they produce concert of action throughout the union in all elections for President. Some may object to all this extra constitutional machinery, but the people, or at least all of them outside of South Carolina, have unalterably decided two things: 1st. That the Presidential election shall no longer corrupt State Legislatures, and 2d. That the election of President shall, if it can possibly be averted, never again be thrown into the House of Representatives. It is now the settled policy of our people to vote for but one of two candidates for the Presidency—they bury all minor differences of interest, passion or principle to keep the election out of the House; and although some of the States, as Massachusetts, Tennessee, Kentucky and South Carolina have occasionally thrown away their vote, or rather refused to vote for either of the regular nominees, yet, the great controlling vote has invariably been cast for one or the other of the two general nominees since 1828. I will cite four remarkable instances to prove this.

There was a time when an ebullition of popular passion raised a strong party in this country against the wide spread and secret order of Free-Masons. And this anti-Masonic party organized for political purposes, and had the courage to aspire even to dictate who should be President. William Wirt, who had few superiors in any age, or country, thought this party of sufficient respectability to warrant him in accepting their nomination for the Presidency. But [illegible] memory of all present, [illegible] and Hale have respectively been run by the abolition party for President at each of the three last Presidential elections. Yet as strong as that party undoubtly are at the North, and as fierce as has been their warfare upon us, neither of their candidates carried a single State, nor got even a respectable vote in any State, such was and is the anxiety of every patriotic American to prevent the choice of President from being left to the House of Representatives. I am aware that much has been said here about the inability of the present convention system, and the election of Presidential Electors in the other States by the people, to reflect the real public will in choosing a President. But I have yet heard no argument to sustain the allegation. Every exercise of franchise is merely a *voluntary* act. No man can be forced to vote in any election, and as the people hold periodical and regular elections for delegates to their conventions, although without any authority of law, we must reasonably conclude, that they take as much interest in voting for a President in other States, as in casting their ballot for a constable, or county clerk.

I have other propositions to submit, but the two upon which I have already enlarged carry conviction to my mind, and as other gentlemen will desire to address the committee both for and against the bill, I shall now proceed to answer some of the objections which have been urged against giving this election to the people. One objection came from the gentleman from Laurens (Mr. Simpson:) I understood him, in the outset of his remarks, to say that he was not opposed to giving this election to the people, nor opposed to giving up our present system of elections and legislation generally, merely on account of its antiquity in the polity of the State. But I must confess that after following him closely in his remarks, I thought he arrived at the conclusion, that he was opposed to this change on no other ground than the antiquity of the present system of electing Presidential electors in South Carolina. In reply to him, I have only to say, that at the time our act of 1792 was ratified this Union comprised but thirteen or fourteen States, with some 15,000, or 20,000 unimportant offices, with a sparse population of but little over 3,000,000 and a federal revenue of only about $5,000,000. Since that time, the mammoth corporation, so to speak, of the federal government, has grown to such huge proportions—the number of States added to this confederacy has been so great, its population has increased so rapidly, its wealth has accumulated so fast, and the facilities of corruption could now operate so fearfully, that if the other States were to elect Presidential electors as we do, I honestly believe before my God, that this Union could not stand the shock of three Presidential elections, because of the corruption that would exist in the state legislatures, or be engendered in Congress, by throwing the election into the House. I therefore appeal to him to hunt up a better argument than "antiquity" against giving this election to the people. Our ancestors perhaps acted wisely in what they did in 1792, and we also, should now act wisely in full view of all the circumstances which surround us and guided by the light of experience in our government, which its founders had not. They established the government and set it in motion and therefore could not make all its parts perfect at once. We should regulate the machinery and alter it, whenever the harmonious action of our complex system demands it. I speak with reverence but in truth, when I express the deliberate conviction that our forefathers themselves would make the change proposed by this bill if they could act as the legislature of South Carolina in 1855, as they did in 1792.

Next let me answer briefly the gentleman from St. John's Colleton. I confess that I endeavored to gather at least a skeleton of his objections to the Bill but that I was entirely unable to do so. He dealt in such grandiloquent phrases, such bold images, such fiery Demosthenic expressions, that I could not for the life of me catch his thoughts as they passed from his lips. He told us a great deal about the French revolution, but I should like to know what that has to do with giving the election of electors to the people. It is very common now-a-days, to refer everything to the French revolution and the French revolution to everything (laughter.) Now I think the French revolution has been a great God-send to college boys at least, for before that startling event, it was fashionable to refer everything to Greece and Rome, and Greece and Rome to everything (laughter.) and I fully expected when the gentleman touched upon the days of the guilotine and the reign of terror, that he would go off to Greece and Rome next (laughter.) But seriously, if the gentleman's objection to the bill be well founded, that the people cannot govern themselves—that they cannot make a wise choice of Presidential Electors and that therefore their Legislature must do it for them, how is it that the people have intelligence, virtue and judgment enough generally, to elect efficient police officers and good representatives to make their laws? If free institutions cannot long survive popular elections, I would like exceedingly to have him tell me how much freedom there is where no popular elections exist!? Or how much freedom there was in Rome when her Senate, which had the chief appointing power to office could be bought and sold? or if he prefers, how much liberty there was in Venice when "The Council of Ten" did all the voting, made all the laws and attended to their execution! The gentleman should not have referred to any branch of the Celtic race for facts in history to sustain his position. If he will read Dr. Lieber's Civil Liberty, he will there find the information, that no tribe of the Celtic family ever enjoyed Liberty. They go not for liberty and union, but too much for *unity*. It is from the Anglo Saxon race that we have sprung. It is their example that we are accustomed to cite and follow in political science. The gentleman did cite the evils of popular elections in some of the "hireling States" as he called them and in which epithet I fully concur. But did not my friend from Abbeville (Mr. Noble) challenge him to give an instance in the southern States where danger had occurred from giving the election to the people. He did not do it, and I defy him now to do it. On the contrary, wherever the elections are given to the people, a spirit of inquiry is aroused and inquiry provokes discussion, discussion stimulates thought, thought produces speech, speech produces action and wise action. It is not the least of the arguments which may be advanced in favor of giving this election to the people, that it would *instruct* them. As things stand now, our people know comparatively nothing of State politics, while they are perhaps better schooled in federal affairs than those of any other State in the Union. It is the business of the parish gentlemen to gag the newspapers and divert the attention of the people from their own domestic affairs and keep their eyes ever directed to the corruptions and misdeeds at Washington. We therefore always see the mote in Uncle Sam's eye, while we overlook [illegible] tion made before, again and again upon [illegible] floor. I have seen it again and again in print, and strange to tell it has never been contradicted within my knowledge, as it might have been. South Carolina boasts of being a free trade State—claims to be at the head of the State rights section of the Democratic party, and yet if her Legislature has always reflected the popular will in the appointment of Presidential electors, and instructing them for whom to vote, why was the vote of the State once given to Willie P. Mangum, a man who has long been famous only for his consolidation whiggery and his excessive devotion to his potations? And yet our legislature, in casting that vote, is said to have acted as the peple desired? Was that vote the reflected will of our gallant people? No, sir, I think not. I remember well once standing in company with a distinguished member of Congress at a hotel in Washington City, when this South Carolina favorite for the Presidency reeled by, and never felt the blush of shame rise so high on my cheek, as when my distinguished companion pointed and said to me, with a bland smile, "I'd not your State once vote for Mangum for President?" Then let it not be said this legislature has always reflected the popular will of South Carolina, or if it is said, let it not go uncontradicted.

Let me take the gentleman to task upon another point. How does he know? How can *any* man know that this legislature has always reflected the will of the people in voting for Presidential electors? Do we not vote here by secret ballot?—Can the people know how any of us vote? Suppose that my district should want its vote cast for Douglass at the next Presidential election, should instruct its representatives to give that vote, could not those representatives come here and cast their suffrages individually or collectively for Buchanan, Cass, Willie P. Mangum, or any one else? Could the people of Edgefield ever know whether their wishes had been obeyed or not? It is worse than folly then to say, that this legislature reflects the popular will in the appointment of Presidential electors, or in any other of the numerous elections that take place here. There is no way of ascertaining the fact, and it is but assertion when the remark is made. Even if the popular will could be ascertained, there is no way of carrying it out here, as our State government is at present organized. Indeed, sir, I maintain that the people of South Carolina have but very little to do with their government, except to feel its oppressions, either in making laws, or in saying who shall expound and enforce them. It is a painful duty, but I assume the responsibility of making good what I have said.

And now, Mr. Chairman, I feel that I am going to tread upon very sensitive ground, but I shall endeavor to keep my own temper and will not wound the feelings of any one farther than may be necessary to tell the truth. I am justifiied in doing so, since one of the strongest objections urged by gentlemen from the up, as well as from the low country, against giving the election of electors to the people is, that it would disturb what are called the compromises of our constitution, and the relations between the two sections of the State. As this is the issue made by the enemies of the bill upon your table I must be permitted to inform the House why I think this election will not now be given to the people—why it was not done long ago and why full and complete justice has not been rendered to the people generally and to those of the up-country in particular.

Whom do the people of South Carolina elect to office. They are allowed to amuse themselves, with the semblance of sovereignty in holding, or voting for myriads of petty Militia offices, and I charge upon members of the parishes here that they are as a body disposed to keep up our present abominable militia system for nothing more, than to flatter the people with the appearance of exercising power where no right, no liberty, but a mere bauble is at stake. What other officers do the people elect? Their humble district police and their very honorable members of the legislature and of Congress.—They are not permitted to elect all their local police even as this august Assembly appoints the commissioners in equity—three of the four district Boards of commissioners, all the magistrates and all the managers of elections.

Now whom do we elect and who are we? I too am no demagogue (laughter.) I know that I am regarded as an outlaw by the parishes, or if you choose, as a hot headed radicalist.

I am as well aware as any man in this House, that they esteem me a [illegible] red republican, who deserves to be [illegible] to France. But I tell you frankly and religiously that I go for nothing but equal justice to all the people and to every section of the State—for nothing more. But to come back to my argument. Who are we? Are we any thing more than a fair specimen of the men in our districts? (laughter) I have heard it remarked that legislatures are but well dressed mobs, or like other great assemblies of men. I believe it was Mr. Madison who went so far in one of his state papers as to observe, that no body of men, even of the wisest and most virtuous in the world, could get together and engage in exciting discussions without degenerating into mobs. Of course I mean no disrespect, when I say that we as a body are but very little, if any above an average specimen of the middle classes in our districts. But notwithstanding this when we arrive here, how is it that we hold on to so much power for ourselves. How is that we have acquired, so much more political wisdom on the road from our homes to this place. I insist upon it we either acquire more wisdom on the road, or ought to do so, because we consider ourselves entitled and able to exercise a great many more powers here than I think we can judiciously. I have always thought, that Legislatures were instituted to make laws, but I think this Legislature was designed to make elections. I assert emphatically that we are an assembly of electors rather than of Legislators, and I say this without meaning any offence, as I have the *esprit de corps* at heart as much as any gentleman upon the floor.

Let me enumerate a list of the officers whom we elect. I have written them down hurridly, because I could not name them all readily from memory, and now I fear that I have omitted the names of some. To say nothing of our own officers, we elect, the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Secretary of State, two Treasurers, Comptroller General, Surveyor General, Adjutant and Inspector General, Attorney General, five Solicitors, ten Judges, twenty-eight Commissioners in Equity, one Master and one Register in Equity for Charleston, one Assessor and one Escheator for Charleston; a President and twelve Directors of the Bank of the State, twenty Trustees of the South Carolina College, nine Regents of the Lunatic Assylum, six Visitors of the State Military Academies, all the commissioners of the various district boards of police, all the magistrates and all the managers of elections in the whole State—that is the catalogue of State officers, whom we elect. Besides these we also elect two United States Senators [illegible] and, sir, we elect them by *ballot*. This general assembly seldom sits longer than three, and never, I believe, more than four weeks. And as we have to elect on the average, about one fourth of these officers at every session of the Legislature, frequently holding two or three ballots in one election—how much time is left us to legislate. Nearly every member of this body always has a friend who is either a declared candidate or an aspirant for some office, now or shortly to be vacant. We are therefore, all electioneerers, with each other, and the candidates and aspirants must electioneer with us.—We must consequently treat and be treated, feast and be feasted—all of this consumes at least half of our time, which should be devoted to legislation.

I will next undertake to show that our votes in legislation are biased; yea, often controlled, by the votes which we intend to give, or hope to receive in elections for our friends, or ourselves (for members of this legislature, are often, very often, too often candidates here themselves, and candidates or at least aspirants for years at that.) Every sound minded man must clearly perceive, that a candidate or aspirant is at all times previous to the election, anxious to increase his popularity with those who are to pass upon his pretentions; hence, that in any great excitement, extending either to the whole, or, a part of the electors, such office-seeker or aspirant must and will be *politic*, or, in convertable terms, prudent and timid. These great excitements constantly occur in every legislative body, and in ours, they for the most part, always assume a *sectional* direction. Hence, no candidate, no aspirant for any office in the gift of this assembly, can give an honest and independent vote on such occasions. He cannot even act as a true man and statesman ought, for the reason that it would be in vain to appeal from the legislature to the people, as the *ballot* system here mocks the people and prevents them from bestowing a solicitor's commission, a judge's gown, or a governor's cap upon their favorite, however worthy he may be.

And there are still other agencies, which operate with almost dictatorial force upon the votes of representatives here in many matters of legislation. The bank of the State, the private banks, the railroads, the college, the millitary academies, and the lunatic asylum, although but corporations, are yet what might be called a *third*, and the most powerful branch of our legislature. The bank of the State has four millions of the people's money, and we manage it. We elect the officers who have influence here. Many members of this body get accommodations there, and they must reciprocate the favor by voting as the bank directs in many matters of legislation, as well as in numerous elections here. If not, actions at law and persecution under cover of the ballot is their portion here, as well as indirect opposition in the primary elections before the people. Many of the other States have a constitutional provision excluding officers of rail roads and banks from sitting in the legislature, but our private banks have large stockholders and directors without limit, who are also members of this body. Under cover of the ballot and other parliamentary tactics in vogue here, these institutions frequently take a hand both in legislation and in elections. The rail roads tand in the same category. The South Carolina College in a different way, likewise plays an important part in the action of this assembly. The same is true of the military academies, as well as of the lunatic asylum; yes sir, even the asylum is married to the Legislature [laughter.]

But now for the overwhelming evidence that this legislature is an Assembly of electors and not of legislators, and that by its peculiar organization an oligarchy of five hundred men are permitted to rule the State with an iron will. I shall at present say nothing more of the organization of this House, than that it consists of one hundred and twenty-four members, half of whom represent taxation and the other half white population. Upon this joint basis fifty representatives, I believe, come from the parishes and the remaining seventy-four from the districts. It would be an easy matter to show, that if our taxation were levied rightly and equally, [illegible] the districts would be entitled to several more members on this floor than they are now, but I leave that for a more fitting occasion and pass on to the other house, at the other end of the capitol. I hope Mr. Chairman, I may refer to that body in that way as I was called to order the other day, for alluding to it by its proper name, and by the way, I think we ought to alter the rules of the House in that respect. It is a rule that we have adopted without any just reason from Great Britain, because as the House of Lords once governed the Commons, the latter enacted the rule in self protection. But this is a digression. In the other end of the capitol there are twenty-three senators from the parishes and only twenty-two from the districts. I trust we shall have twenty-three after a while. Our upper House is organized upon the principle that each election district shall have one senator always. Each of the judicial districts in the up-country is also an election district and therefore each of the districts proper, has only *one* senator. Each of the judicial districts, Beaufort, Colleton, Charleston, Georgetown, Orangeburg and Sumter is *sub-divided* into election districts called parishes. Beaufort by this arrangement has four senators, Colleton three, Charleston ten, (she always takes care of herself,) Georgetown two, Orangeburg two and Sumter two. The districts proper have above 12,000 square miles of tax paying territory, more than the parishes. They also possess above 163,000 more white inhabitants, above 61,000 more slaves and above $53,000,000 more of property according to the last federal census, and the last annual report of the comptroller general, and with reference to the five items of land, live stock, implements and machinery, town lots and slaves, estimating the latter at $500, per head and counting the wealth of the City of Charleston as so much parish property. The five items of property to which I have referred are the only legitimate indices of the relative wealth of the two sections. I have purposely excluded any account of household and kitchen furniture [laughter] plate, jewelry, ready cash, bank and railway stock, merchandize and the like, of which the districts undoubtedly have more than the parishes. Now this excess of territory, white population, slaves and property in the districts is virtually without representation in the Senate. And just as much senatorial representation as the parishes have *more* than they ought, just that much *less* have we got than we ought to have. Hence if senatorial representation be based upon either territory, white population, slaves, or property of the State, the *excess* of either in favor of the districts as before given must actually be multiplied by *two* to ascertain how much of either basis is unrepresented in the Senate from the districts to give them equal senatorial representation with the parishes. The parishes know this and hence the tenacity with [illegible] for no man, power vol- [illegible] tained, the [illegible]. This or- [illegible] he parishes [illegible] ing else re- [illegible] two Hou- [illegible] ntage. As the legislature [illegible] t officer in the State and as the districts have nearly *four* times as much white population as the parishes, it is evident, upon a general principle that they must also have four times as many *candidates* for offices in the gift of the legislature, as the parishes. This is the stronghold of their power and the secret ballot here is the masked battery from behind which, they strike down every champion of the up country, and it is the iron chain which binds and subjects 221,734 people, the real men of the State, to 58,651 *saints* of the parishes—it is the anchor which has kept our ship of State in one position ever since 1808. Now for the oligarchy. What is the policy always pursued by ambitious men in South Carolina? It is to gain power at home, or in their individual election districts and swap it off in the Legislature. No aspirant for State honors cares one iota about cultivating the people *outside* of his own election district. The result is, that about half a dozen of what are called *leading* men in each district hitch teams—carry the local elections for the Legislature, either for themselves or their tools, and sell their district's vote in the Legislature, either in matters of election or legislation, to promote themselves to the high offices.

They, however, give and take. A cabal in one district will join its forces to a coterie in another district and these two will unite with a clique in a third district, and so on throughout the State, until a regular phalanx is formed, so as always to have a majority ready to fill any vacancy that may occur. The spoils of office in South Carolina are partitioned regularly in this way, and yet we rail against the corruption and intrigue, which secures federal offices by taking a part in Presidential elections. The reigning powers of the several districts are all the while flattering, complimenting and extolling each other. They interchange civilities through the newspapers, for our sheets, with a few honorable exceptions, are *dumb* on State politics, and are ever filled with fulsome adulation and disgusting toadyism. Every little district junta has its organ, edited by some one who holds an office in the gift of the Legislature, or it is controlled by a magnate who has a berth, or wants one. Delegates from each district meet annually in Columbia during the sitting of the Appeal court in May, or during the session of the Legislature. They concoct new schemes, divorce old alliances, form new ones, and so the State offices have been filled for the last fifty years. Sometimes friends are sold and enemies are reconciled. As ambition generally knows no law but success, the ballot enables it to play traitor to a friend, or friend to a traitor without detection. Thus, deceit, hypocracy, intrigue and diplomacy, rule the State. An ambitious plebeian who has not yet been initiated into the mysteries of the oligarchal clubs, watches with the cunning of a fox to ascertain who is the most prominent candidate for every vacancy, and as soon as he has gathered the information, he forthwith unites his fortunes to those of the general favorite, or in different phrase, an interloper always goes for the powers that be, not for those that *ought* to be. Many a man has risen to high offices in the gift of the Legislature in this way. Merit with us is generally ignored, while intrigue when the most skilful is the most rewarded, and yet we are ever protesting against giving the election of Electors to the people, because forsooth it is said cunning and wire pulling would then control the offices and the people too. But in this great game for place, the parishes have still the advantage.

They are united in solid column against the districts, because animated by a common feeling to preserve the power which they obtained by fraud and hold by diplomacy. The parish representatives having but small constituencies, can easily be returned again and again, like the members for the boroughs in parliament. And no matter who represents a parish, he knows that his people would as soon part with property they had obtained unjustly as give up their political power which rightly belongs to the up-country. Not so with the representatives of the latter, who have generally large constituencies, so turbulent, so hard to manage, so full of ambition, so conflicting in local interests, that but few members are re-elected. This constant rotation in up-country representation virtually leaves the parishes in possession of most of the experience and tact of the legislature. Again, the up-country is always divided, because having four times as many candidates for office, the parishes can select with which of them to co-operate in elections, or with what faction to unite in legislation. Parties, factions, clubs, juntas, cliques, and coteries, unite or divide in voting for or men measures. All individuality of the representative is forgotten, and as the stakes, the spoils, the honors, the salaries are the leading object with each individual member more than the good of his country, the representative is thus corrupted by the *ordinary* operation of our government. There are extraordinary occasions when any government may produce corruption in its legislative officers, but that government which by its *ordinary* operation produces such corruption as ours ought not to stand. The parishes are the canker of our system, because being the strongest party in the State, that are always united—never divided—all parties in the up-country bid for the low country support. The latter dictate their terms in legislation, as they never will permit any law to be passed except it suits them in every particular. Hence our confused legislation; hence our adherence to laws and forms long since abolished even in corrupt England. Hence the thirty years struggle to divide Pendleton, notwithstanding the justice of her claim. Hence the greater difficulty of now dividing Edgefield and Barnwell, although they can urge even better reasons for both a judicial and political division than Pendleton. Hence the persistant refusal of South Carolina to give the election of Presidential electors to the people, because a majority of the legislature can cast the vote of the State, and the parishes, as I have shown, can always control the legislature. And hence also the refusal of the State to take any part in Presidential elections, although she remains in the Union and participates in the legislation of Congress, and continues to submit the causes of her citizens to the adjudication of the federal courts. By refusing to give the election to the people, she refuses to go into the national convention, because the people need take no interest in the matter, as they can have no ultimate control over the vote of the State, on account of the ballot here, making this an uncontrolable body, and because further the people in South Carolina are wholly unacquainted with the convention or caucus system as it is sneeringly called by some. By the State refusing to go into the national convention, she takes no part whatever in the election of that mighty and all important officer—the Federal Executive. The national nomination is virtually the election; it is really the election, because the subsequent State elections are mere ratifications of one or the other of the two previous national nominations. So that for the last twenty years we have voted for no President except perhaps Mr. Polk.

The parishes are a unit. They always act in concert. I have watched their members here and they have watched me; (laughter) I have listened to their conversation, and I suppose they have listened to mine. I have attended the sessions of this legislature for four or five years, and I am satisfied from what I have seen and heard, that there never was in the history of the world, in ancient or modern times, any set of men banded together in a closer embrace, than your parish representatives. They do rule the up-country by bribery. They may even now keep their seats, as champions from the districts will maintain their cause of conservatism in everything. It has become fashionable, however, for leading men of the up-country, to declare war against the parishes *sub modo*, but they only do it to get their price, to get votes, to get office. They go to the parish members and say, "elect me to a high office, which will give me commanding influence in the up-country, and I will use that influence in your behalf among my people. I will take up the cry of conservatism—will represent the interests of the whole State, and make as much ado as any man can." Treason to his conscience, his God and his section, has been the price of many an office bestowed by this legislature upon up-country gentlemen. Yes, sir, the parishes throttle us with the hands of our own leading men, who fire into the camp of their friends like Arnold, as they go over to the foe. While they are receiving the reward of their treason, and after the price has been paid down, it is the occupation of their lives to prate of the rights of the parishes and say nothing of the wrongs of the districts.

Peace! peace! peace! is the eternal theme of our oligarchy. "You will disturb," say they, "the compromises of the constitution. Let alone the landmarks which our fathers have left us!" I have thought that of all words South Carolina professes to hate that of "compromise" the most. But it is right I suppose in the State government, although wrong in the federal.—Strange inconsistency! The other States have altered their constitutions and have called conventions for that purpose. Virginia, for instance has done it frequently, and I do not think she has been injured by it; but to change, alter, amend, or modify anything in South Carlina, the parishes say, would bring desolation and ruin upon us. "No parties," is their cry, and yet out of thirty or forty factions, I will not call them parties, the parishes rule them all. Parties are a blessing. No free country was ever without them. When was England without two or three great national parties? They watch, detect and expose each other's overdoings or short comings.

I do not object so much to the number of officers elected by this Legislature as the *mode* of that election. The ballot! the ballot! is what I raise my voice against. In this connection I remember an incident which occurred at the last session of this Legislature which pained me very much, and of which I desire the country to be informed. We all remember it but too well, or at least I do. On the first ballot for Directors of the Bank of the State, only eleven were chosen. On the second ballot for twelfth Director there was still no election, because of three candidates being run, and on the third ballot, *two* more votes were cast than the *number* of members who had voted. Yes, a poor but worthy young man of Charleston was thus deprived of his election, and I want it to go abroad to the people, that two members of this *incorruptible* body, two members who had sworn to preserve, protect and defend the constitution of this State and of the United States, who had been elected perhaps by a high minded, intelligent and virtuous consituency, went up to the battot box and deposited two votes each in an election for a Director of the *Bank of the State*. I repeat it again, and every member knows the fact, although it does not appear upon the printed journals of the House.

Nearly all the States have given all elections to the people except that of Judges and U. S. Senators, and some of them have given the election of even Judges to the people, which I cannot approve. In addition to this, every State constitution in the Union (or nearly all of them) has a provision of this sort: "That in all elections by the people, the vote shall be by ballot, but in all elections by the Legislature, the vote shall be *viva voce*." Four of the States, however, vote *viva voce*, even in primary elections.

CONCLUDED ON THE FOURTH PAGE.