

A SENATE EXPLOSION.

CONKING AND PLATT RESIGN.

Their Unexpected Action Creates Intense Excitement—A Remarkable Letter to the Governor of New York, Explaining Their Reasons for Resigning.

A profound sensation was created at the Capitol yesterday by the resignation of Senators Conkling and Platt from the State of New York.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 16, 1881. Sir: Will you please announce to the Senate that my resignation as Senator of the United States from the State of New York is hereby forwarded to the Governor of the State? I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant.

ROSCOE CONKING.

To Hon. C. A. ARTHUR, Vice-President.

SENATE CHAMBER, May 16, 1881.

Hon. C. A. ARTHUR, Vice-President.

Sir: I have forwarded to the Governor of the State of New York my resignation as Senator of the United States for the State of New York.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant.

T. C. PLATT.

A rumormongering followed the reading of the communications, and Mr. Hill of Georgia, who is not a member of the Senate, was the first to utter a word.

Mr. Burdick, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, reported back the consent of that committee to the construction of ship canals or other ways for the transportation of sea-going vessels across the isthmus connecting North and South America, and also to the rules and regulations under which other nations shall participate in the use of such canals or other ways.

Mr. Burdick gave notice that he would call it up to-morrow.

Mr. Dawes moved to go into executive session.

Mr. Cockrell—I thought you wanted to consider the other resolution.

Mr. Chandler—I have no idea but that the Senator would like to go on with it. It is in accordance with the disposition which he has shown from the beginning.

Mr. Hill of Georgia—The Senator said that the resolution would be introduced if the resolution was not acted upon.

Mr. Dawes—But the Senator would never be convinced until he happened to have a majority.

Mr. Hill—Oh, we won't insist upon having it considered.

Mr. Dawes—An accident is an eye-opener to the Senator.

Mr. Hill turned around and suggested to Mr. Burdick of Illinois, that there was nothing to prevent the Senate from adjourning this week.

The Senate then, at half-past twelve, went into executive session.

When the doors were reopened at 1:40, the Senate adjourned until to-morrow.

Had a dynamic gas bomb exploded in the Senate there could hardly have been a greater sensation. It staggered and scattered the Senators of both parties in an instant, and they rose from their seats and divided into small knots here and there to discuss the unexpected turn of affairs.

The news spread throughout the city like wildfire. Telegraphic and telephonic wires were put into requisition at once, and in less than twenty minutes the lobbies of the hotels and the streets of the city were alive with people who wanted to know the truth of a fact which would hardly be believed.

At the Republican office a half dozen clerks were kept busy at the telephones answering questions by wire from all parts of the city. Within ten minutes after the news was announced, in the Senate the bulletin boards of the Republicans were decorated with the intelligence, and crowds collected around them to learn all the facts.

In the Departments the excitement was so great that nearly all of the clerks left their desks and gathered in the corridors.

"Have they resigned for sure," said a chief of division from New York.

"True as you're born," said well-known newspaper man.

"I don't feel like resigning myself until Robertson is withdrawn," said he.

"Conkling is right," said another stalwart. "He is a statesman, a man whose record is clear, and has been treated meanly by the President he lifted into power."

All through the Departments, and in the streets and hotels, the excitement grew more intense as the matter was discussed. All sorts of opinions and theories were advanced, but in all the discussions the climax appeared to be that when two Senators of a great State like New York resigned something was about to drop in the Republican ranks. The general impression upon all sides was that Senators Conkling and Platt would be returned to the Senate within ten days.

Some concluding vote of the two bodies, one of which Robertson himself is a member. "Some weeks here," said a Senator, "when the friends of Senators Conkling and Platt were not all present in the New York Legislature, a vote was passed recommending Senator Robertson for collector. This vote was afterward reconsidered in the assembly and laid on the table. It was, in the first place, a Democratic trick to snub Conkling. What a glorious victory it will be," said he, "to see Senators Conkling and Platt walk back into the United States Senate with the almost unanimous indorsement of the Legislature of the State which carried Garfield into the White House last November?"

"It is James in sympathy with Conkling and Platt," said an anxious inquirer.

"That's why I don't resign."

"Because he likes you better than principle. He is willing to sacrifice for Conkling, and that is about as far as he will go. He is not a man of a *coup d'etat* could be made."

The facts contained in the following letter from the two Senators and the letter quoted therein signal by them and by the Vice-President and the Postmaster-General will perhaps create a more profound sensation than the simple announcement of the two resignations in the Senate:

The Letter to Governor Cornell.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 16, 1881.

Sir: Translating, as we do, our resignations, respectively, of the great trust with which New York has honored us, it fits that we acquaint you, and through you the Legislature and people of the State, with the reasons, which, in our judgment, make such a step respectful and necessary.

Some weeks ago the President sent to the Senate in a group the nominations of several persons for public offices already filled.

These nominations are the result of the action of the President, and the Secretary of State is the official channel through which they are conveyed to the Senate.

It is the duty of the President to see that the Senate is kept advised of the action of the President, and the Secretary of State is the official channel through which they are conveyed to the Senate.

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FROM THE SANCITUMS.

VOICE OF THE PRESS EVERYWHERE.

The New York Papers on the Resignation—Opinions and Speculations—Will the Two Senators be Returned—What Will the Administration Do?—Notes.

New York, May 16.—The Times, under "A Political Stage Strife," says: "In politics, as in art, a great climax demands a fitting prelude. An ignoble dilemma does not lend itself to the response, or to the 'product' class, need not be decided. Here, assuming General Merritt to be an officer of average fitness and honesty, it might be reasonably argued that all Senators should with alacrity give his displacement by a man of obvious superiority. Possibly it might be said that all should advise the selection in General Merritt's place of a man who, without superior fitness, had rendered his country or State some special service. The case in hand does not belong to either of these classes.

THE ADVOCATES OF MR. ROBERTSON, and his legislative and professional experience and attainments, his superior superiority in the qualities, the knowledge, business habits, and familiarity with the revenue laws and system of the United States, which might make him more competent than General Merritt to collect the duties and administer the vast business pertaining to the port of New York. Certainly he cannot, in this respect, be held an exception to rules of right and consistency on which the Constitution and laws have placed the public service. We know of no personal or political service rendered by Mr. Robertson so transcendent that the collection of New York should be taken in the midst of a term and given to him as a reward. Mr. Robertson is reported by the New York Tribune to have declared that his nomination was a "reward" — a "reward" as if action as a delegate to the National Convention.

IF MR. ROBERTSON IN HIS ACTION was influenced by a sense of duty—if he voted and acted his honest convictions—it is difficult to see what claim he has for any reward, not speaking of the honor of the action, which an estimate is thus invited, is understood to be this: Mr. Robertson and sixty-nine other men accepted from the State convention a certain number of delegates to a National Convention. The State convention declared a plainly stated judgment and policy to be observed and supported by those it selected as delegates. Mr. Robertson is reported to have accepted the nomination, and to have been selected as delegates gave implied consent. But several of them, in addition, made most specific personal pledges and engagements to elect themselves in good faith throughout to secure the nomination of the man whom they made their pledge as the means of obtaining their own appointment as delegates, and they did, as we both personally know, obtain their seats in the National Convention, and they made no statement of their earnestness and fidelity.

THE OBLIGATION THIS ASSUMED, we understand to involve integrity, as much as the obligation of one who receives the proxy of a stockholder in a corporation, or of one who is obliged to vote as his principal would vote. Whether Mr. Robertson was or was not himself bound, not only by honor and implication, but by an express pledge, is a question which is expressly giving his word, because quite immaterial to the question of his own conduct. It is insisted that he "organized the bolt," or, as it has been sometimes stated, "he was the leader of the bolt." This is to say that he lured, persuaded, induced, or otherwise procured others to vote, and had obtained their seats by doing so, to violate their word and betray not only the Republicans assembled in State conventions but the Republicans of their districts as well, who had trusted in their own pledges. It is insisted that he procures another to do a dishonest or dishonorable act, must share with that other the guilt, and should share also the odium justly attaching to it.

It is asserted that Mr. Robertson, upon whatever ground we put it, is just justification for ourselves should we become parties to using the public trust which belong to the people to require such service in such modes. But the public trust which belong to the people to require such service in such modes. But the public trust which belong to the people to require such service in such modes.

THE SENATORS IN MAJORITY in New York avowals in consequence as ables to bear message and commission in the Senate of the United States. With a profound sense of the obligations we owe, as devotion to the Republican party and its creed of liberty and right, with reverent attachment to the great State whose interests and honor are dear to us, we hold it respectful and becoming to make room for who may correct all errors we have made, and intend to discharge all duties we may be called upon to perform. It can be supposed that all these public trusts are to be, or would in any event be made personal perquisites, to be handled and disposed of by the Senators of the State, and that the Senate, by its votes and action, but to liquidate the personal obligations of any individual, however high in station, the conditions are utterly vicious and degrading, and their acceptance would compel the representatives of the State to become parties to the same. Following this sweeping and startling Executive act came ominous avowals that dissent or failure to "advise and consent" would be held an act of open defiance, and that the President would take Executive displeasure.

THUS, WE FIND OURSELVES confronted by the question whether we should consider the President's high and solemn duty of Senators by consenting to what we believe to be vicious and harmful, or be assigned the position of disloyalty to an administration which we helped to bring in and the success of which we earnestly wish for every reason and motive which can enter into the case. We know to the avowal of any party which requires such submission as is now exacted. Although party service may be fairly considered in the case of public officers, it can hardly be maintained that the Senate is bound without cause to remove incumbents merely to make places for those whom any individual, even the President, or a member of his Cabinet, wishes to reward for services to others or serviceable to him.

ONLY ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO the Senate advised that General Merritt be appointed collector of New York. It is understood that among the Senators who so advised was Mr. William W. Brewster, Secretary of the Treasury and head of the Department whose subordinate General Merritt is. Another Senator known to have given this advice was Mr. Knowlton, now Secretary of the Interior. It is said that, like the Postmaster-General from our own State, these Cabinet officers were not taken into consultation touching the removal of General Merritt, but their sworn and official action as Senators is none the less binding on the Senate.

IN THE PLACE OF AN EXPERIENCED OFFICER in the midst of his term, fixed by law, it is proposed suddenly to put a man who has had no training, and no special fitness for his official duties. In the inaug-

AT ALBANY.

How the News Was Received at the State Capital.

ALBANY, N. Y., May 16.—When the news of the resignations of Senators Conkling and Platt was received it was bulletined by the evening papers, but elicited little interest. The hotels, as usual on Mondays, were quite empty, and those who talked of the matter simply wondered what would be the next movement. Later members of the Legislature commenced arriving, when some interest manifested. No one, however, appeared to know what would be the result of the action. Not a few thought both Senators would be re-elected and it was suggested that Mr. Conkling would be elected to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Platt. This would give him two more years to serve than he had. No information could be secured at the executive chamber beyond the expression of a supposition that the news was correct. When the canons are set on foot, among them that there will be a union of anti-Conklingites with Democrats to elect one Senator from their wing and one Democrat. But the great interest was manifested to learn what the reasons were. Both houses were crowded with spectators, and when the senate adjourned those in the chamber found their way into the assembly chamber. During the reading of the letter the spectators occupied all the standing room, and at the conclusion of the reading the speaker was obliged to order the floor to be cleared so that business could be proceeded with. The State papers were given out, but not until late in the evening. The anti-Conklingites are in high place. The time for going into an election to fill the vacancies will be fixed to-morrow.

AS SOON AS IT WAS LEARNED that the Governor intended to send the letter of reasons for the resignations of Senators Conkling and Platt to the Legislature, the excitement was increased. The statements which were prepared for them a thoroughly dramatic surprise will captivate them. The politician playing at statesmanship, who is merely stager, will hardly succeed in furnishing them with any new matter. The representatives of the State of New York in the United States Senate evidently intended to formulate a challenge and a defiance to the administration. They have merely penned a meek apology for their own equally without precedent and without excuse.

THE "HERALD" SAYS: "Affairs in Washington have taken a sudden and dramatic turn. It is not known what has happened but what is expected. Nothing could be more unexpected than the resignation of Mr. Conkling and Mr. Platt from the Senate. Such a step could only be taken under a strong sense of duty, and can only be so considered. It does not belong to the mere cunning and waywardness of politics. Men like Mr. Conkling and Mr. Platt would not take the supreme step of resigning unless they were fully convinced to give the act the gravest possible meaning. The truth is that from the beginning Mr. Garfield has committed himself irrevocably to Mr. Blaine, and in his dealings with his friends of Mr. Garfield are those who are not to be deceived. Mr. Conkling resigns from the Senate in the interest of peace. In the interest of peace let Mr. Blaine retire from the Senate. Conkling has never had the training nor the experience to manage our foreign affairs. The other members of the Cabinet are men without special value or force, and, if they want places, should be quartered elsewhere in the Government. Mr. Conkling is to his foreign office a statesman like Hamilton Fish, and to our great officers like Edmunds, Sherman, Boutwell, Hoar, Frelinghuysen, Washburne, and others, he is a man who would serve him, not for ambition and revenge, but for the best interests of the party and the Nation.

THE "TRIBUNE" captures its editorial "A Theatrical Exile," and says: "Of course no one takes his resignation. Neither Mr. Conkling nor Mr. Platt has any idea of leaving the Senate. There is a character in a French play called 'The Minister' who, when he is dismissed and quitting the house in a rage, but always leaves his umbrella behind him, as a pretext of returning and a means of returning. It is not so with Mr. Conkling. He has given up the umbrella of his office. The fact is that the resignation will be completed by the fact, at Albany, and they will have whatever glory they can get out of the theatrical performance."

THE GENERAL OPINION. Collector Merritt, Rufus Hatch, Jay Gould and Others Have a Talk.

NEW YORK, May 16.—Collector Merritt was found in his office at eleven o'clock, and being asked to give his opinion of the resignation of Messrs. Conkling and Platt said: "The resignations are a great surprise to me, and I suppose to every one else. He was anxious to know the opinions expressed by the members of the Legislature. Mr. Hatch, of Messrs. Hatch & Foote, when asked what he thought of the resignations, replied: "I think they should be followed by the resignation of Mr. Garfield. He did not believe the money and stock markets would be affected. Mr. Gould was found in the Superior Court, special term, listening to an argument in the case of the United States vs. John A. Stewart. He was being asked to give his opinion of the resignation of Messrs. Conkling and Platt said: "The resignations are a great surprise to me, and I suppose to every one else. He was anxious to know the opinions expressed by the members of the Legislature. Mr. Hatch, of Messrs. 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