

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20.

TILLMAN'S REPLY.

The Expenditures of the State Government—Mr. Tillman Says He Will Take the Penitentiary and Guarantee a Revenue to the State.

[From the News and Courier.]

Many newspaper readers of late have been sorely puzzled over the hen and egg problem: "If a hen and a half lay an egg and a half in a day and a half, how many eggs will six hens lay in seven days?" I have been the innocent cause of giving the people of South Carolina a more difficult and perplexing problem than this to solve, which may be stated thus: If a chairman of the ways and means committee (Col. Haskell) disputes a fact and tries to prove his assertion by making two conflicting and incorrect statements; if two editors who are supposed to keep posted (the News and Courier and Register) endorse him and say he is proved by the records that Mr. Tillman was wrong; if one comptroller general produces other records which show that both Col. Haskell and Mr. Tillman are incorrect, and then himself falls into two palpable errors; and lastly, if two or more special correspondents at Columbia make misstatements and draw deductions therefrom, all in defense of the powers that be and their policy, and to elow Mr. Tillman up as an ignoramus and an innocent or intentional liar, how will the people ever learn the truth? How will this meddlesome, impudent, ignorant farmer, who dares to "whimper" and "yell" in Democratic conventions, and whom the farmers must unload if they wanted to get anything from the manipulators and "bosses," how will he solve this sum-in-political arithmetic and make the taxpayers understand it? The task may appear a difficult one, but I must attempt it, and from habit, as well as because I want to reach the people of the whole State, I must ask you to allow me space in your columns to defend myself.

In the State Convention, which met on the 17th instant, I made the assertion that the expenditures of the State Government were \$240,000 more in 1887 than they were in 1879. This was denied by Col. Haskell. That evening I wrote a note to the comptroller general, Mr. Verner, asking him to examine the official records and decide who was correct. I have just seen in the News and Courier and Augusta Chronicle of 26th May the statement of Gen. Verner, together with the explanations and comments of the "special correspondents" of those papers.

Gen. Verner makes the difference in the expenditures for 1887 and 1879 \$220,000 in round numbers, but goes on to explain that only \$177,000 in cash was paid as interest on the public debt that year, the balance of the interest being funded. Further, that had the whole of the interest been paid in cash there would have been a difference of only \$27,000 in the two years named. He was not called on to make any such explanation but to decide simply the question of veracity between Col. Haskell and myself. His official position and supposed familiarity with the matter had enabled him to convince the Convention that I was talking of something I knew nothing about. I am glad, however, Gen. Verner has made it, as it was a fact. I did not know, and I am only desirous of having the truth made known. But Gen. Verner himself has fallen into two mistakes, of course unintentionally.

The total expenditures of the State for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1887, were:

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes 1887-88, 1887-89, 1887-90, 1887-91, 1887-92, 1887-93, 1887-94, 1887-95, 1887-96, 1887-97, 1887-98, 1887-99, 1888-89, 1888-90, 1888-91, 1888-92, 1888-93, 1888-94, 1888-95, 1888-96, 1888-97, 1888-98, 1888-99.

On page 112, comptroller general's report, 1887, the expenditures are put at Gen. Verner's figures—\$969,787. He, or somebody else, must explain the difference of \$18,187. I am not able to do it. Again, Gen. Verner states that only \$177,000 was appropriated to pay interest on the public debt in 1879. But \$199,114 was actually paid that year in interest, as will be seen by reference to the comptroller general's report for 1879, page 100, leaving \$175,458 due for interest that year, and to pay which there was in the treasury a cash balance, October 31, 1879, of \$243,488. Gen. Verner says this interest was funded in consols bonds. If, so what went with the money reserved to pay it? Perhaps Col. Haskell who knows so much about our finances, will take the trouble to explain? Thus far I have shown that, as taken from the official reports, I was approximately correct in saying the expenditures for 1887 exceeded those for 1879 \$240,000. I had no intention to deceive any one in mentioning the unpaid interest of which I knew nothing at the time, taking the aggregates just as I found them. But since I have been forced to study this question more thoroughly, I will do some more figuring and give as full and fair a statement as I can. I have tried in vain to obtain a full and complete set of the comptroller general's reports so that I might arrive at all the facts, but I have found it impossible to get them. If Col. Haskell or Gen. Verner will sell, lend or give me these books, I will try to learn just how and where our money goes, and why, with a large increase in the phosphate royalty, our taxes are on the increase too.

Now here are some figures which will enable your readers to get a better idea of the real facts in this case. They are similar or extraordinary expenses incurred in the years named:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Amount. Includes 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900.

Now let us deduct those two sums from the respective years.

Table with 2 columns: Year, Amount. Includes 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900.

Even the good Hon. our sometimes nod, and the distinguished chairman of the ways and means, who has bulldozed and browbeaten so many farmers, will mind how he accepted another "dare" from one. I have redeemed my pledge, and shown that I was right and he was wrong, and I now dare him, or any one else, to disprove what I have asserted in this letter.

A few words on the editorial in the Weekly News and Courier of 23rd and I am done. In it, what I said in the Convention is characterized as "discreditable in both matter and manner," and

Add unpaid interest, 175,458

1879 of \$77,832

An attempt has been made to saddle all the increase in expenditures on the State House and educational and charitable institutions of the State; but making allowance for these, I have, the plea is shown to be false. But this is not all. In his inaugural address, November 30, 1880, Governor Hagood said: "The honest, economic and efficient administration of the State Government which the revolution of 1876 promised has been realized. Every obligation of the State is met from the income of the fiscal year, and no deficiencies are incurred. There is yet room for retrenchment, and as from time to time without impairing the efficiency of the Government retrenchment can be made in the executive, legislative and judicial departments, as well as in the miscellaneous expenditures, it should be done." There has been no "retrenchment" whatever; on the contrary, marked increase of burden.

The aggregate increase is as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes State House, 103,746; South Carolina College (difference), 12,230; Citadel, 20,400; Add difference between 1879 and 1887, as above, 77,832; We have not increased, \$231,308.

and nobody can explain it away, however much it may be defended. This, it will be remembered, was what the Legislature of 1880 appropriated, which when it met, was full of the idea of economy. The same Legislature, at its last session, increased the taxes to \$100,000 and voted any and all appropriations asked of it except for a separate agricultural college, and the expenditures this year are found to be considerably over a million dollars. They gave the Canal to Columbia with convicts free of hire to finish it, voted \$80,000 for pensions, gave \$5,000 to Clifton, \$5,000 to the Winthrop Training School, gave the South Carolina College \$22,000 more than is mentioned above, besides the Hatch and land script funds, \$20,700, refused to reappropriate representation and do justice to the disfranchised white men of Greenville, Spartanburg, Laurens, Marlboro, Sumter and Edgefield, and was altogether the most subservient to "ring" influences that has ever met since the Democratic party came into power. "I may be childish to whimper," as the editor of the News and Courier puts it, "that members of the Legislature are debauched or bamboozled at Columbia." I have marshalled the facts and the people can judge for themselves. But if I "whimpered," hump! when I made that assertion, somebody must have felt my truth when I showed up the moral rottenness of Charleston and Columbia about the census. "It is only the galled jade who whines," and 'tis not surprising that the effort should be made by the News and Courier to discredit me before the people whose cause I am fighting. But I am not through with my figures yet.

In his message to the General Assembly November 29, 1882, Governor Hagood said: "On the 1st of November, 1881, there were 690 convicts in the Penitentiary. At same date this year the number was 824. An examination of the superintendent's report exhibits the following transactions:

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes Balance on hand October 31, 1882, \$21,190; Expenditures for the year, 60,989; Expenses proper of Penitentiary, 80,989; Expenses board of directors, 1,267; Paid on Canal, 8,086; Paid into State Treasury, 40,000.

Balance on hand October 31, 1882, \$41,901

With one thousand convicts now in the Penitentiary, two hundred and fifty more than the average for 1882, the institution is run at a loss, and has to "borrow" \$25,000 from the treasury, which it did not repay. Senator Murray very graciously offered to "make me superintendent, and pension me besides," if I would give bond to make it pay the same as it did in '82, and the "ring" cheered his cheap wit. I am not hunting that or any other position, but I will do this, and it is a bona fide business proposition: I will lease the Penitentiary for a term of years, at \$40,000 per annum net to the State, and give a sufficient bond to carry out the contract. Now let him get a bill passed to lease it under any reasonable and proper restrictions, and I will show him that I am not merely "making a noise." Later is too much in demand in this State for so much of it to yield no profit to any but pets of the "ring."

I will next call attention to Col. Haskell's incorrect and conflicting statements before the Convention. He said, first: "I do deny it most positively." (What I had said about the expenditures) "as easily explained. In 1879 there was a fund of money in the treasury and the Legislature did make appropriations therefrom largely less than in 1887, because that surplus was used in addition to the appropriations made. There is a difference between a levy and an appropriation, and the reason why we collected less in 1879 than in 1887 was because we had in the treasury a surplus which had been previously collected."

At the close of the debate Col. Haskell made another statement from the statutes (I quote from the proceedings of the Convention in the News and Courier) "and showed that in round numbers in 1879 the expenditures were \$908,000 and in 1886 (a year I had not mentioned) they were \$750,000." "Amid the applause that followed Mr. Haskell's remarks his 'ringsters' would have applauded him if he had said black was white, which he did in effect." Mr. Tillman heard say "I will prove the falseness of those figures before the people, &c."

I merely desire to call attention to the contradiction between his first and last statement, and to the fact that the figures he gave were not "round," and are shown by Gen. Verner's statement to be totally incorrect. Further that Gen. Verner says that the "surplus" was not used in 1879, as stated by Col. Haskell, but that the "unpaid interest" was funded.

Even the good Hon. our sometimes nod, and the distinguished chairman of the ways and means, who has bulldozed and browbeaten so many farmers, will mind how he accepted another "dare" from one. I have redeemed my pledge, and shown that I was right and he was wrong, and I now dare him, or any one else, to disprove what I have asserted in this letter.

A few words on the editorial in the Weekly News and Courier of 23rd and I am done. In it, what I said in the Convention is characterized as "discreditable in both matter and manner," and

the bulk of it termed "invective and exaggeration." I have never laid any claim to oratory; and knowing the Convention was very impatient to adjourn, I made no attempt at anything but a direct and clear statement of my ideas on the matter without wasting time on the usual oratorical "burlesque." I never "delivered myself as the official spokesman of the people" or made any "threats" of what they would do. My words were: "I stand here in the interest of the common people of South Carolina and ask that you give them their rights," and my reply to Col. Haskell was not "unguarded." He was mistaking my words just as Capt. Dawson has done, and I said, "I have never claimed to represent anybody but myself," which is the simple truth. The only "commission" I had in Columbia was from the Edgefield Democratic Convention. After a warm debate, in which the identical arguments used by Col. Haskell, Senator Murray and Mr. Gray were advanced by a friend of the "ring," that convention by a vote of 101 to 58 passed a resolution in favor of primary elections for all offices in the gift of the Democratic party to Governor down." I am told sincerely that my own associates voted against that. They did it in the face of the resolution, and it only proves that the "yell" I gave about the State Convention "not representing the people" was true. I may not represent the people of Edgefield in all things, but I feel sure on this point and I also feel sure that it will not be long before a State primary for State officers will replace the Rottonborough Convention system. The appeals to sectional passion and selfishness will not prevent the common people from learning, even in the negro counties, that their interests and rights are safer in their own keeping than when delegated to delegates who represent themselves and their own personal ambitions only, or who allow themselves to be traded like sheep to further the aspiration of some place-hunter.

Just as surely as Democracy means white supremacy, and that the nomination by the Democratic party means an election, just so surely will the people tire of electing men in November whom they have had no voice in nominating, and the result will be that the Democratic party will fall to pieces of its own rottenness unless the people are allowed to exercise the right, dear to every Anglo-Saxon, of self-government. But I forget. I am "threatening," or doing what the News and Courier calls "threatening," and I must stop. This is the "volcano" to which I alluded, and no sane man will deny the danger. The editor of the News and Courier chooses to assert that my warnings and opinions are "threats." The burden of his declamation was that the people demanded this, that and the other, and if they were denied what he called for, this, that and the other would happen. He does me too much honor. The demand for a State primary comes from counties, and it has never been denied. It will continue to come and grow in volume and strength, without any effort of mine, and the aristocratic oligarchy which now governs us had as well prepare to yield it gracefully. The fight for it in the Convention was not my fight, and the defeat was not my defeat, as many seem to think. It is the people's battle, and they will win it in the State as they have won it in the counties.

R. B. TILLMAN.

Roper's S. C., May 29, 1888.

P. S.—I hope a sense of fair play will make all papers copy this that published the debate in Convention or Gen. Verner's statement.

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By the World-Budget Company will be strictly in accord with the patriotic interests of the Democratic party of South Carolina, and will be totally unconnected. Further that Gen. Verner says that the "surplus" was not used in 1879, as stated by Col. Haskell, but that the "unpaid interest" was funded.

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