The Chatham Record

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1883.

H. A. LONDON, Editor.

CERTAIN members of the Senate wasted the greater part of two days last week in putting themselves on record as the veriest set of demagogues that ever disgraced a deliberative body in North Carolina. We allude to their action in regard to the bill forbidding the issuing of passes by railroad companies. As the Senate had killed the bill to establish the railroad commission, which the people demanded, and as it might be alleged that this action was influenced by the passes issued to them by the railroad companies, the senators thought that the best way of clearing themselves of such a suspicion was to forbid the further issue of passes. But they did not like to deprive themselves of railroad passes without making others keep them company (for "misery loves company") and so the bill also forbid the granting of any railroad pass to any judge, solicitor, or other State officer. An amendment to the bill was adopted making it an indictable offence for any man to accept a free pass. Another amendment was adopted forbidding the issue of a pass to editors, although the introducer of the amendment stated that he introduced it merely as a joke. Another amendment was adopted that all members of this Legislature who have used such passes shall render them up to the President of the Senate and pay over to the railroad companies the amount of travelling they have done on them this session. Of course this was done to prove the sincerity (?) of their action in passing the bill. The bill with all the amendments passed its second and third readings by large majorities, but of course it will not pass the House and become a law, and the knowledge of this fact no doubt caused many senators to vote for it. It was fitly characterized by Senator Evans as "a buncombe farce." As to forbidding the issue of railroad passes to editors, of course that is the purest humbuggery. In the first place these passes are issued to editors for a "valuable consideration" (as lawyers call it), being paid for by advertising the schedules and other notices of the railroad companies, and even if they were given without a consideration no Legislature can constitutionally pass a law to forbid it.

CONGRESS adjourned at 12 o'clock on last Sunday, and the country is to be congratulated thereupon, for we regard it as the most fortunate event that has occurred in a long time. This Congress has brought disgrace not only upon the political party that controlled it, but also upon the nation whose highest legislative body it was, and at the late election the people condemned it in the strongest manner. There probably has never before been a Congress in which so few of its members have been re-elected. In both branches has this Congress disgraced itself. The Senate consumed, at the opening session, week after week in a scramble after the offices, resulting in the most miserable "deadlock," as it was called. Week after week the body calling itself the dignified deliberative body in the world—the dignified(?) Senate of the United States—was wrestling with the momentous question as to who should be its doorkeeper! It really seems incredible, and yet 'tis true, and 'pity is 'tis true.' This Senate will be memorable because of the treachery of one of its members, Mahone of Virginia, who thereby gave the control of that body to the republicans. It is also memorable because of the number of its presiding officers, of whom there were four—Arthur, Bayard, Davis and Edmunds.

The House disgraced itself at the outset by electing Keifer as its Speaker, and having as its leader such a man as "Secord" Robeson. But the greatest outrage perpetrated by the House was its action in deciding the contested election cases. On last Saturday, the very last day of its session, the House voted to seat Cook, of Iowa, in the place of Cutts, and finally adjourned without any decision in the case of Lee against Richardson. This inexcusable delay in the decision of contested election cases cannot be too severely denounced. The closing hours of the House were very disorderly. The members were in session all of Saturday night, and acted in a manner not calculated to enhance their dignity. They amused themselves by throwing paper-balls at the heads of those who were asleep in their seats, and laughing and joking like tipplers in a bar-room.

A tariff and revenue bill was finally passed that is a sham and a fraud. While it will reduce the revenues of the government about $60,000,000, yet it is no substantial relief to the great body of the tax payers. The whole history of this tariff and tax legislation, extending over two years, shows the total incapacity of the republican party to deal with such questions, and their utter unwillingness to afford the necessary relief from an unjust and oppressive system of taxation.

THE LEGISLATURE did not adjourn on last Monday, as was expected, but will probably adjourn tomorrow. Since last Saturday the members have served their country without any pay except the proud satisfaction of showing their patriotic and unselfish devotion to duty! But as this does not pay board bills it can't last long, nor should the people expect their legislators to serve without proper compensation. The very men, who waste the time of our Legislatures in the early days of the session, are the first to leave when they cease to draw per diem, and those who work industriously are the ones who remain until the end. We are gratified to know that all the members from Chatham have remained at their post of duty, but that is not surprising to those who know them.

We hope to be able next week to inform our readers somewhat of the nature of the new laws enacted by this Legislature, but at present we hardly know what bills have passed or their character. The bill to make a change in the organization of the Board of Agriculture has passed the House with some amendments to the bill as passed by the Senate. As we understand it, the bill provides for the election of one commissioner from each Congressional district and also retains the Governor, the President of the State Agricultural Society, and the President of the University, and appropriates $700 a year to the Colored Industrial Fair. The House has passed, by a vote of 81 to 21, a bill to pay $75 a year to every disabled soldier of the State who served in the Confederate army. A speech in favor of it was made by Mr. Hayes, of Robeson, who was a soldier in the Union army. The House has passed a railroad commission bill similar to one that was introduced into the Senate and killed to pass that body. The bill to redistrict the State the same referred to last week has passed both houses and has become a law. The bill to extend relief to the owners of the Western North Carolina railroad has passed. The House has passed a bill to prohibit fishing on Sunday, under a penalty of one hundred dollars. The following additional trustees of the University have been elected, viz: D. L. Russell, Isaac E. Stephens, W. H. H. Burgwyn, W. W. Lewis, L. R. Page, T. M. Holt, J. E. Mason and T. J. Jarvis, one-half of them being members of the Legislature.

Our Raleigh Letter.

RALEIGH, N. C., March 6, 1883.

DEAR RECORD: The Legislature is still in session and will probably remain in until the end of the week. The democrats are remaining at their post better than was expected. Forty-one of them (a quorum) are voted in the senate today although they are on their mettle. The entire Chatham delegation is still on hand and hard at work. It is a matter of surprise to see how many bills can be passed in a day now. But little speech making is indulged in. The house today passed a railroad commission bill somewhat similar to the one reported by the minority of the committee to the senate and which was killed in the senate. If the bill becomes a law it is expected to have a full attendance of the Legislature the next day, as nine-tenths of the members are supposed to be candidates for the position.

The Legislature today elected trustees of the University. Seven additional trustees were elected to be chosen of persons living near by and who would probably attend meetings. It is rather remarkable that Chatham, the nearest county to the University, was not honored by an appointment, while the names of two or three prominent alumni were suggested. Of the additional members five of the seven live over one hundred miles from Chapel Hill.

The Legislature has elected the magistrates. Quite an excitement was caused when the Senator from Edgecombe, who is a negro, explained his vote and voted against the nominees of the committee because three negroes were appointed in his county. It is useless to say that most of the democrats immediately changed their votes and scratched the Edgecombe negroes.

It is generally admitted that this has been the hard working Legislature since the war. The senate and house number of bills have each exceeded one thousand. Many a page of foolscap has been foolishly and uselessly wasted. The democratic caucus has decided not to materially amend the election law, as was suggested in our last might be done.

Q. Z.

Samuel L. Wright, supposed to be a Southern planter, who registered at the Tremont House, in New York, as from Edgecombe county, North Carolina, committed suicide last Friday night by shooting himself.

The Work of Congress.

From the New York Herald.

The Forty-seventh Congress, which came to an end yesterday at noon, will not fill a very creditable page in the Congressional History. It did little or nothing that it ought to have and it did a number of things that it not to have done. The single important (?) and beneficent law passed in the whole course of two years was the Civil Service Reform bill, which owes its being as a law to a democratic Senator, Mr. Pendleton, and was adopted by the unwilling republicans, mind, private curses, only because public opinion demanded it.

When this Congress met in December, 1881, the republicans found themselves for the first time in many years confronted with purely business questions. President Arthur extinguished the Southern questions by his Message, in which for the first time in many years there was not a word about "the South." His first Message, like his second, was mainly composed of recommendations and suggestions relating to the finances, the navy and the civil service. To these the republicans paid not the least attention, having elected as Speaker, under the leadership of Mr. Robeson and the combination of Pennsylvanian and jobbing interests, the most ignorant and least capable person who has occupied the Speaker's chair since the beginning of the government. Mr. Keifer at once arranged the committees for a jobbing session. Prominent democrats of long experience were carefully left off committees where their knowledge would have been valuable to the country, but too tempting to jobbers. Mr. Robeson appeared in the three or four important places in which such a person naturally seeks to influence legislation, and became also the chairman of the republican caucus—and the result was what might have been expected.

The President and Secretary of the Treasury reported a great surplus revenue of over one hundred millions; the republicans refused to reduce taxes. The President recommended economy in expenditures; the republicans passed and forced over the veto a river and harbor bill so scandalous in its extravagance that the country was shocked and disgusted, and at the following fall elections retired the chief authors of that audacious—winnie to private life.

The only important measures of the first session were the Tariff Commission and the Anti-Polygamy law, and both have already fallen into contempt and disfavor. The present session has been notably less extravagant than the last but it has been almost equally useless to the country. Cut from the "Civil Service law" which accidentally forced itself through the Pendleton law, which is at least of doubtful expediency, it has had no good thing. Its best subject, Learning, has been passed by the President and congress by the country. It is true that it stopped the coinage of silver dollars, it revised the revenue laws enough to alarm the industries and impose surplus revenue, it refused to pass a railroad law, it refused to simplify itself and the jobbers of the Hoosier did all they could to make it, it added another million to the long list of wasteful expenditures. It adopted a needless and internal tax bill, of which the one part is so framed as to remit some taxes but retain in office all the tax collectors, while the other part the tariff revenue commission, appointed by the President, and a commission composed of men who represent the principal interests involved, refused to sign it, and it was carried through by a minority of the commission in a manner that forbids any response to the report. The tariff work of the session was done by the committee of which Mr. Randall was chairman, and which spent months in the consideration of the subject, and which gave the country a tariff which, with some important changes, gives different rates in three different places, which according to the statement of experts, will lead to more Treasury surplus and general uncertainty than any preceding tariff, and which will force the immediate attention of the next Congress to a new revision and thus keep all industrial enterprises in a state of uncertainty—to accomplish this piece of legislation, so called by the republican caucus, a gag rule, was used all precedents of the House and, as Mr. Tucker accurately remarked, the House of Representatives under this republican gag rule passed a bill collecting more than two hundred millions of dollars from the peoples without allowing the House to consider it and almost without allowing it to be read.

This is the brief and bad record of this republican Congress. It shows incapacity in the party leaders to deal with those questions which are to be henceforth the leading questions before Congress; it shows a propensity to extravagance and jobbing so fixed and strong as to have got beyond the control of the upright members of the party, and a reckless disregard of the peoples comfort and welfare which insists on the retention of needless taxes and opposes the most necessary reforms of bad laws.

We should be sorry to believe that the next Congress will be as incompetent and as wasteful as this which has just expired. Worse it cannot be.

Congress has appropriated $3,000 as a fee to Guiteau's lawyer, Charles H. Reed, for defending him.

W. H. Pratt, president of the bank of Mobile, while attempting to pass between the cars of a freight train at Louisville depot, fell and was run over and killed instantly.

Sing Lung, a Chinese murderer, who was to have been executed last Friday at San Francisco, Cal., hanged himself in his cell during the temporary absence of the guard.

Our Washington Letter.

[From our regular correspondent.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 3, '83.

Protection was the battle cry in this Congress. The advocates of protection for its own sake whipped into the party traces the low-tariff republicans in the house and succeeded in forcing through the most extraordinary tariff ever known in a legislative or deliberative body—a rule by which the house might vote to concur in the senate bill, while it was not allowed to vote the other way. Undoubtedly a majority would have voted for the bill as it came from the senate had the opportunity be given, but by the rule cooked up for that purpose it was sent to a packed conference committee, and the result is no revision of the tariff. The bill reported from this so-called conference is not a reason worth talking about. Judge Kelley and those acting with him preferred failure to the passage of any bill that affected the profits of certain interests they are there to protect and favor.

The capitol has been exceedingly lively all the week—the final week of the dying Congress. The galleries have been packed, and an air of business and excitement has pervaded the whole building. The evening sessions appeared to be especially interesting to visitors, judging from their eagerness in warming up the hill. The house draws best. There is more talking, slugging repartee, excitement and spectacular oratory in the house than in the senate.

Strangely the notes they receive encourage them, and the audiences enter fully into the spirit of the proceedings. Altogether the show is better than a circus. "You will see a regular parrot and monkey time from now on in the house," was the information confided to your correspondent early in the week by a veteran house doorkeeper, and that is a deal. "About a hundred and fifty members are going out, perhaps never to return, some to Congress, and the tenths of them will have some pay. Life and death seem to run rough in the last 48 hours. They will fight and gallop in an interesting manner, you can depend on it, and the galleries will have fun enough to last a lifetime." He was right. The senate did not seem much as usual in the way of laying out plans for killing the session. The proposition for a Yellowstone park trip appears to have taken hold, there will be no more Mississippi river hopefuls to make, and Senator Ingalls railroad commission project was not pressed. Mr. Anderson's Kansas proposition, similar to Ingalls', had a prospect was engrafted in the agricultural appropriation bill, giving the Commissioner of Agriculture the duties suggested by Senator Ingalls and Mr. Anderson.

The corporate defendants are [illegible] their spirits up and body [illegible] preparing to launch at the carcass of corporation [illegible] Rerdell but as a matter of fact they are [illegible] rapidly. [illegible] Others [illegible] its. On the 16th it was reported about town that Dorsey had "skipped," as they expected would be the proper to be done. Mr. Ingersoll's faltering [illegible] R. Dell, the old [illegible] that the latter has [illegible] and however bad [illegible] appear [illegible] [illegible] the whole [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]