

The Chatham Record

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1884.

H. A. LONDON, Editor.

THE STATE CONVENTION.

The Democratic State Executive Committee will meet at Raleigh, on the 16th of this month, for the purpose of appointing the time and place for holding the State convention. The committee must decide whether to hold two conventions—one for the appointing of delegates to the National convention and another later to nominate our State officers—or to have only one convention for both purposes. The latter proposition is objected to by some, because our State platform, as they allege, should not be promulgated in advance of the National platform, and also because the candidates will be nominated too long a time before the election. While there may be some force in the first objection, yet we do not think the second is tenable. We have taken an active part in every political campaign in this State since the close of the war, and we are assured from past experience that the democrats have all to gain and nothing to lose by a long campaign and a full discussion of political issues. The experience of the past campaigns has fully proved the wisdom of nominating our State candidates several months in advance of the election.

In 1872 the convention was held on the first of May (the election that year being in August); in 1876 and 1880 it was held the middle of June; and in 1882 it was held on the 5th of July. Why then should we this year depart from these precedents? If an attempt is made to hold two conventions, the result will be that neither one will be well attended. We hope the committee will call only one convention and hold that about two weeks prior to the National convention.

THE STATE EXPOSITION.

The Directors of the North Carolina State Exposition held a meeting last week and perfected arrangements for the erection of their building, and transacted other important business. There were present at this meeting more directors from different portions of the State than at any previous meeting and all were enthusiastic as to the success of the undertaking. The contracts for furnishing the lumber and for the construction of the proposed building were awarded—the former to Messrs. A. F. Page & Sons, of Blue's Crossing, and the latter to the North Carolina Cap Company, of Raleigh—and the total cost will be about thirteen thousand dollars. It will be the largest building ever erected in North Carolina, and will be peculiarly suitable for the purpose contemplated, affording the greatest possible space at the least cost. The building will be 45 feet wide and form a square, each side being 336 feet long, and two other buildings intersecting in the middle, each of same width and length as the sides. An aisle or passage 13 feet wide will run throughout the entire building—it's total length being nearly half a mile—and the space on each side will be divided into sections 16 feet square. Every section will be numbered and one or more (as may be required) will be allotted to every county or other exhibitor. A vast number of large windows will afford ample light for the inspection of the exhibits, and a railroad track will run through the centre of the building for their transportation. A large number of lithographic pictures of the proposed building will be sent all over the country to let everybody see how it will look, and we doubt not that its handsome appearance will induce many persons to attend the exposition simply to see such a building.

It will be erected near the spot where is now the machinery shed in the fair grounds. In addition to this building, Florid Hall, the grand stand, and all the other buildings of the State Agricultural Society will be used, and all will doubtless be well filled.

The price of admission will be the same as at the State fairs, and that is, fifty cents for adults, and children under twelve years of age half price. All the railroad companies have agreed to give the reduced rates for visitors that they have heretofore given at the fairs, and will transport free of charge all articles intended for exhibition.

BLAIR'S EDUCATIONAL bill has passed the Senate by a vote of 33 to 11. This bill provides for the distribution of \$77,000,000 in aid of the common schools of all the States as follows: \$7,000,000 for the first year, \$10,000,000 for the second, \$15,000,000 for the third, and this amount to be then diminished \$2,000,000 yearly until the expiration of the eighth year.

Fearful Forest Fires.

The fires mentioned in last week's Review as raging in the pine forests along the line of the Raleigh and Augusta Air Line Railroad were the most extended and destructive ever known in this State. We are now enabled to give full particulars which are quite exciting. From the News and Observer of the 3rd inst. we copy the following:

"The pine woods, for thirty miles on each side of the Raleigh and Augusta Air Line railroad between Lenoir Springs and Hamlet were on fire last night. The fire extended for an unknown distance on each side, principally on the south side. The strong gale blowing at the time swept the fire through the forest like a tornado. The sight, while appalling, was grand. The tall pines were in a blaze from base to summit. A large number of cross ties and an immense amount of wood and timber were destroyed along the line of the railroad, and the towering mounds of the whole section have been entirely destroyed. Many were in imminent danger of total destruction. The railroad warehouse caught on fire several times but was extinguished. The oldest church, five stowes, sees, and gunnery school, the two guard houses, the barn and stable of Mr. W. C. Petty and a flat car on the side track at Manly were burned. The water tanks of the Raleigh and Augusta railroad at Hamlet were consumed. At 2 o'clock a. m. to-day Hamlet was surrounded by a column of fire and the lights of the conflagration could be seen for miles in every direction. Doubtless many fine houses have been consumed, but the only one we have positively heard of is that of Mr. Henderson, near Hamlet, who lost his residence together with all outbuildings on the premises. The whole community has been busy during the night fighting the fire. The heat from the fire was so oppressive at times that it was necessary for the doors on windows of the passenger train to be closed while passing through it.

Vast masses of rice were actually thrown through the air by the sweeping gale. Bits of half-burned pines were thrown great distances and fell in the middle of cleared fields. The fire towered to an amazing height, and so vivid was its glare that it made all objects plain at great distances. The people were truly alarmed. At Blue's Crossing and at Kinston people gathered in large numbers and fought the flames with such energy and desperation that those pines escaped with little injury. It is reported that many dozen carpenter distilleries are completely destroyed, as well as large quantities of resin, turpentine and other naval stores. It is the opinion that the fire has extended 1,000 miles."

South Carolina. It will pass over a distance of half a mile. No news of any disastrous fire has been received yet. Many persons have lost clothing and some have lost everything. It is by far the greatest and most disastrous fire ever in the South Carolina timberland forests.

Another account in the News and Observer of the 4th is as follows:

"John Williams Smith, superintendent of the Raleigh & Augusta Air Line, was at Hamlet on Friday night. He took a freight train north, and but for his great efforts, losses of causal Manly and other points would have been heavier. Several times the car of the engine had to be closed while the plucky engineer dashed back and forth through the flames, which were like a wall on either side of the road, and threw out the most blinding and intense heat. The wind blew sixty miles an hour, and the fire was blown in all directions. Sparks and burning brands and tree tops were actually blown miles away. Families were caught so quickly that they could not even say that clothing and bedding and dozens, perhaps hundreds of persons, shaved that night with cold. Many are now homeless, and the farms where forty-eight hours ago there were happy homes are now blackened and desolate wastes. At Hamlet there is a large pond, in which stood many express trees. The flames were blown across the wide expanse of water and the tops of these trees caught. All night they burned, until the flames reached the water's edge. The sight was awful in the extreme and cannot be pictured in words. The vast sea of flame, the railroad people working to save their property, the lumbermen working equally hard to save lumber, the owners of houses vainly endeavoring to save their homes—all made a sad scene as has never been witnessed in this part of the world. The losses at points remote from the line of railroad cannot yet be estimated. No doubt hundreds are homeless."

The same paper says:

"The fire was on both sides of Fayetteville, at a distance of eight miles south and five miles north. In the country devastated by the fire the extent was unparalleled. The people were fighting the fire two days and nights, and many were on the verge of utter exhaustion. Mr. William Clarke, the line reporter of the Western Union telegraph company, was on the R. & A. reading the fire, and says the reports of it do not depict one tenth of its horrors. The telegraph poles were burned down, the wires broken, and work of any sort was difficult in the midst of the heat and glare. The very air felt as if it had been scorched. It is said that many dozen houses were burned, that cattle were burned, that thousands of birds and small wild animals were destroyed by the furious waves of fire. They rose to heights of from 200 to 250 feet and vast sheets of flame were blown in a nearly horizontal direction."

Our Washington Letter.

(From our regular Correspondent.)
WASHINGTON, D. C., April 5, '84.

As it now stands the examining report of the special committee is a pretty mess for both Keifer and Boynton, and a very touching combination of compliment and censure which the committee allowed itself to indulge in. Boynton is exonerated from the charge made against him by Keifer, because Keifer's testimony does not come up to the committee's standard of legal preponderance, although his evidence was confirmed by two witnesses. Boynton being the defendant, is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, which the committee entertained that the whole broad of the witnesses on both sides were not lying at each other straight from the shoulder throughout. The committee nevertheless declares that both of the gentlemen are of an unblushing character, so far as the committee is able to judge from the testimony, and the powerful effort made by each to prove the other a liar, the committee hopes, may not again find imitators in the Republic. It may here be said that Boynton's denial about the McFarlin family claim business is very like the pleadings of the great Sheridan in the horned helmet case, in that he never knew a McFarlin, and if he did it was not exculpatory, and if he says there was no malice prepease about it.

For many years during and since the war, the general Government has been called upon to pay more money in liquidation of the District expenses for improvements, than the whole tax-free of Chicago, with more than half a million inhabitants! In 1873, these expenditures reached the enormous sum of eight million dollars, while in 1875, it was almost not quite so much, and in my year since 1875 have the expenditures been less than two million dollars, with no corresponding public improvement to show for it. Taking the capital and all the other public buildings and adding together their aggregate costs, we find that it does not amount to much by several millions as has been laid out for the work upon the streets alone. With these heavy expenditures all the time increasing and with no prestige to maintain us except that of being the capital of a great nation, it has become at ready a serious question whether it were not better to fix the capital at some city whose citizens have had energy enough to build it up going along without governmental dependence.

It is good time now for Rev. Dr. Dixie to get in his work to save Washington city succeeds in getting new public buildings than can be easily transferred beyond the Mississippi. A long range shows that no improvement has occurred in expenditure of over a million dollars since the year 1876, nor is there share in running the District governments constant in its public buildings, buying and maintaining its public parks, and all this is my alone, do you see we are living out in pictures every year and we could hardly miss it from our numerous snapshots on hand. But the city is getting more extravagant in its outlay for public improvements, and more and more ridiculous in its demands upon Congress, which has hitherto been paying one-half of the annual expenses of the municipal government, and the recent demand that the Government shall pay one-half the expense of the construction of a three million dollar bridge over the Potomac, has aroused everybody's curiosity as to where and when this is taking place.

Those who believe that the public domain should remain in the actual possession of Government, to be distributed to actual settlers instead of going into the hands of speculators and wood pirates, will be pleased to learn that the Government is entering a determination to enforce what law there is in protecting itself against the stupendous frauds that have become local to actual defiance. The tendency in millions upon millions of acres of the public lands by hundreds of thousands of men, the Government in the occupation of other millions of acres of land under the homestead and pre-emption laws, through forged and perjured affidavies, and the appropriation of immense bodies of timber land belonging to the reservations, have been going on for years in the face of the efforts that have been put forth by the Government to restrain them, which from the indequity of the appropriations for special agents, it is hard to see how it can be done. 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