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SPEECH BY PRITCHARD

On Unconstitutionality of Proposed Suffrage Amendment.

Attempt to Confer Elective Franchise by Inheritance.

How a Solemn Party Pledge Was Violated.

Perils Attending the Submission of the Amendment.

A Poll Tax Payment Provision That Will Disfranchise Many Voters—Encroachments on Political Rights—Legalizing Fraud.

Statesville, N. C., Oct. 18.—Senator Pritchard addressed a big and enthusiastic meeting here tonight.

Congressman Linney and J. M. Moody are also on the program to speak, but too late to send owing to the early closing of the Western Union office here. Your correspondent will forward their remarks for publication tomorrow.

Senator Pritchard spoke as follows:

I consider the proposed amendment to the Constitution the most important question that has been presented to the people of this state since the war. The right of suffrage is one that is prized very highly by the American people. It is a historical fact that those who have once enjoyed the high privilege of the elective franchise are loath to yield it without a desperate struggle. The Constitution of 1868 was framed by the republican party, and among other things it contained a provision which guaranteed free suffrage to the rich, the poor, the illiterate and the educated alike. The adoption of that constitution marked an era of encouragement to the common people of our state. Thereafter there had existed a deep-seated prejudice against the poor and illiterate white man as a result of the system of slavery which had done so much to degrade labor and discourage those who earned their living by manual labor. There has never been a moment since the adoption of the Constitution when it has not been the intention of the leaders of the democratic party to do all in their power, if the opportunity should present itself, to amend the Constitution so as to restrict the right of suffrage and, if possible, prevent the poor and illiterate white people of this state from exercising that right.

It has been contended all the while by the republican party that, in the event the democratic party should be permitted to control our affairs, it would eventually attempt to amend the Constitution so as to exclude the poor and illiterate people of both races from the enjoyment of the privilege guaranteed them by the Constitution of 1868. On the other hand, the democrats have strenuously denied that such was their intention and in doing so have ridiculed the charges made by the republicans.

A VIOLATED PLEDGE.

During the last campaign Mr. Simmons, chairman of the democratic executive committee, devoted a good deal of his time in attempting to convince the people that his party was not inclined to restrict the right of suffrage. I call attention to the following interview which Mr. Simmons gave out on the 25th of September of that year and which was published in the Raleigh News and Observer, one of the leading democratic papers of this state:

"For the past twenty years or more, just before every election, the republican speakers, at their midnight meetings, have been in the habit of telling the negro that if the democrats came into power their right to vote would be taken from them. After the democrats came into power in this state they always had some reason to give these oracular beings why the democrats had not disfranchised them as they had before predicted.

"First, they told them that if the democrats got the state government they would disfranchise them. The democrats got the state government and did not disfranchise them. Then they told them that if the democrats elected a president they would disfranchise them. The democrats elected a president and did not disfranchise them. Then they told them that if the democrats got control of Congress they would disfranchise them. The democ-

crats got control of Congress and did not disfranchise them. All along the honest white men of the state laughed at these lies, and marvelled that the negro did not have sense enough to see that he was being duped.

"Finally, the negro himself began to see through the trick. He had seen the democrats in full power in the state for twenty odd years, and had learned through experience that that party did not propose to disfranchise him, and he too began to laugh at these lies and finally refused to be frightened by their roar any longer. So the old republican scarecrow had to be pulled down and put away."

The foregoing statement is in the nature of a solemn pledge made to the people of North Carolina by the democratic party through its state chairman, Mr. Simmons. At that time we were in the midst of a most exciting campaign. Mr. Simmons, as chairman of the democratic executive committee, realized full well that unless he, as chairman of the democratic party, made a full and complete denial of the allegations that were being made by the republicans against the democrats, that the voters of the state would again repudiate Chairman Simmons and his party.

There has never been a more binding and solemn contract entered into by any political party than the one that was entered into when the people of North Carolina voted the democratic ticket with the assurance from Mr. Simmons that there was no foundation for the statement that either white or black would be deprived of the right of suffrage in the event that his party should be successful. He even went so far as to characterize the republican speakers as LIARS, hoping thereby to convince the most credulous that there was not the slightest foundation for the statement. He undertook to show, by the foregoing, that it was absurd for any one to assert that the democracy of North Carolina would ever favor the abridgement of the right of suffrage in the slightest degree.

However, Mr. Simmons is not the only individual who made pledges to the people. I am informed that three-fourths of the democratic members of the last legislature made solemn pledges to the voters in their respective counties that if elected they would oppose any and all measures that might be proposed for the purpose of disfranchising any class of our citizens.

THE PROPOSED DISFRANCHISEMENT.

Notwithstanding the many pledges made by the democrats in order to obtain control of the legislature, we are confronted with a proposition to amend our Constitution, which, if adopted, will in my judgment, disfranchise the poor and illiterate classes of both races. They were not content with submitting this proposition under the fair and impartial election law which had been enacted by a legislature composed of republicans and populists and under which they had so recently been able to gain control of the legislature; but, in order to enable them to carry into effect their scheme of disfranchising the unfortunate classes of our people to which it referred, they enacted an election law which was framed, by manipulation and otherwise, to thwart the will of the people, and thereby enable them to do that which the people would consent to if given a fair opportunity to express their will at the ballot box and have the same recorded as expressed.

THE STATE CONSTITUTION.

In order that we may have an intelligent conception as to the proposition which is to be submitted to the people, I beg to call your attention to Article 6, Section 1, of the Constitution of North Carolina, which it is proposed to abrogate and which reads as follows:

"Art. VI., Sec. 1. Qualifications of an elector. Every male person born in the United States and every male person who has been naturalized, 21 years old or upward, who shall have resided in the state twelve months next preceding the election and ninety days in the county in which he offers to vote, shall be deemed an elector. But no person who, upon conviction or confession in open court, shall be adjudged guilty of felony or any crime infamous by the laws of this state and hereafter committed shall be deemed an elector, unless such person shall be restored to the rights of citizenship in a manner prescribed by law."

It will be observed that the foregoing article is in harmony with the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States, which read as follows:

"Art. XIV., Sec. 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive without due process of law, or property without due process of law, any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

"Art. XV., Sec. 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

"Sec. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

THE STATE'S PLEDGE.

It was expressly agreed at the time North Carolina was readmitted into the Union that the people of our state should retain a provision in its Constitution in harmony with the provisions of the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States and in order that there may be no mistake about the matter I call attention to the following provision contained in the enabling act which was passed on the 25th day of June, 1868:

"That each of the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana,

(Continued on fifth page.)

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE

Important Document From the Republican State Committee.

Declaration Regarding Proposed Constitutional Amendment.

Validity of Election Law Will be Tested in Courts.

Statesville, N. C., Oct. 18.—The republican state executive committee in session here today issued the following:

To the People of North Carolina:

A crime is impending against your rights as freemen. The assault has been made but not yet consummated. You were warned in the last campaign of the Democratic design against your liberties. The men who warned you were denounced as liars by the Democratic organization. You now know, and the world now knows, whether the Democratic leaders were telling the truth, or the men whom they branded as liars. It is too late now to bandy words; all disguise has been thrown off; the fight is on. You are driven to make the last stand for your liberties. You believed that your rights were secure, entrenched in the Federal and State Constitutions, fortified by the Acts of Congress, and protected by the solemn pledge of the Democratic party. That party is now trying to break down all these safeguards and impudently tramples in the dust its own pledged word.

Unless we mistake the temper of the people of North Carolina, they will rebuke this most scandalous breach of faith, and stamp out this second attempt to nullify the National Constitution. We have no fear of the verdict of the people if freely expressed, and honestly returned. We know that they will never consent that the subjection of one class of citizens shall be made permanent in order that the privileges of another class may be made hereditary, especially as our Bill of Rights declares, section 30, "No hereditary emoluments, privileges or honors ought to be granted or conferred in this state."

The Republican party in the State of North Carolina does not, and has never feared the submission of any question to the popular will, providing there is an opportunity for a free and fair expression of that popular will at the ballot box. The present election law passed by the last General Assembly, if enforced in North Carolina, stands as an insuperable barrier to the honest exercise of the elective franchise by the legal electors of the State. Added to these objections we find another: The arraignment of public opinion as an axiom of liberty that is the life of all free republics. This cannot be without the existence of separate political organizations. This election law, and the proposed Constitutional Amendment, controlled solely by one political party, would destroy forever the possibility of the existence of more than one political party in the State of North Carolina. This necessarily results from the control of the election machinery by one party.

Such laws have existed in the State of Mississippi, which has a population of 1,400,000 population, fifty per cent. of whom are white, and which elects seven members to Congress, does not cast as many votes for its entire delegation as were cast in the Ninth Congressional District of North Carolina in the last general election. In South Carolina, which has 1,131,143 inhabitants, and elects seven members to Congress, a smaller vote was given than was polled at the last general election in the state of South Carolina for two members. In South Carolina 68,689 votes were given in all the seven Congressional Districts and only 7,475 votes given for the Republican ticket. These figures show that there

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is practically only one political organization in the states of South Carolina and Mississippi. The possibility, therefore of the arraignment of any public abuse at the bar of reason cannot be here in North Carolina under the proposed conditions, similar to those which now exist in the states of South Carolina and Mississippi. It can be established by testimony that cannot be denied that a political discussion in the states of Mississippi and South Carolina has not been heard by even its most intelligent citizens for a number of years. This is because of the absence of any but the one political organization which has entire control of the election machinery.

It is a matter of public history, gathered from the public press of the state of Mississippi, that in the last campaign in said state for the high office of United States Senator, before the Democratic primaries, that the campaign was nothing more nor less than a shameful quarrel between two of the most distinguished citizens of that state. One distinguished gentleman of the state, who was a candidate, charged the other with the selling of the pardoning power while governor. The answer to it by the party charged, which was omnipotent in its effects on the popular mind there of those interested, was by alleging that he making this charge was guilty of a far greater crime, to-wit, the disruption of the Democratic party.

We are convinced that the proposed amendment is both unnecessary and unconstitutional. We are convinced that the new election law is utterly void and that any proceeding under the same will be a nullity. We are resolved to test the validity of these measures in the courts, and to fight them to the utmost at the polls.

This great struggle rises above party and reaches the realms of conscience, and we are confident of the support of every citizen who obeys the promptings of an honest conscience, who respects the sanctity of an oath, and the inviolability of his party's public pledge.

By order of State Republican Executive Committee.

A. E. HOLTON, Chairman.
W. S. HYAMS, Secretary.
Statesville, N. C., Oct. 18, 1899.

The committee also passed a resolution authorizing its chairman to employ counsel to bring suit for the purpose of testing the constitutionality of the democratic election law and also thanking Hon. Richmond Pearson for his letter in the Gazette on the amendment and election law, and endorsing the sentiments expressed in that letter.

SHAMROCK REMEASURED.

Will Now Have to Give the Columbia Time Allowance

New York, Oct. 18.—The re-measuring of the Shamrock took place today. Three thousand, three hundred and eighty pounds of lead ballast was put on board during the night. The yacht went to Sandy Hook bay where the top mast was rigged for tomorrow's race.

The Shamrock's re-measurement allows the Columbia 16.29 seconds in a mile race instead of the Columbia allowing the Shamrock 6.3 seconds. This change was caused by the Shamrock putting on board the ballast which set her deeper in the water, increasing her water line.

The Shamrock's rigging has been set to rights. There is little likelihood of another accident.

The race tomorrow will be 15 miles to Windward and return and the weather forecast indicates a good wind.

A MERCHANT SHOT DEAD BY HIS BROTHER

Tragedy From an Unknown Cause in a South Carolina Town.

Charleston, S. C., Oct. 18.—N. T. Pittman, 60 years old, a prominent merchant of Gourgins, S. C., was shot and instantly killed by his brother, A. J. Pittman, aged 50, in a reading room of the Hotel Calhoun here today. The exact cause of the shooting is not clear, though it is believed the man who did the shooting was trying to get money from his brother. The murderer was arrested.

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BATTLE NOW IN PROGRESS

Between Forces of Gen. Sir George White and Free State Troops.

The First Important Test of Strength in Boer War.

Much Stirring News From the Disturbed Country.

Uneasiness Over Possible Uprising of Savage Tribes.

REPORT THAT A WHITE FLAG IS FLYING OVER MAFEKING—QUEEN WILL SUMMONS THE MILITIA TO ARMS.

London, Oct. 18.—What will probably prove to be the first important action of the war is reported to have commenced yesterday (Wednesday) twenty miles westward of Lady Smith, cavalry under Sir George White having encountered the Free State commands, reported to number over 10,000.

It is understood that General Prinsloo, commandant general of the Orange Free State, is conducting the movement of the Boers.

White has 9,000 men in the field and at Lady Smith, and a few hours is likely to give an indication of the result of this first test of strength.

WILL NATIVES MAKE TROUBLE?

Meanwhile, there is no little uneasiness in British official circles regarding the eagerness of the natives to take a hand in the fighting. Native participation is an incalculable factor, and neither side wants it. The British believe the Basutos and Swazis are burning to attack the Boers, but the Zulus are equally hostile to the British.

If all these ruthless warriors get out of hand, hell will be let loose.

Few fresh rumors come from the Mafeking district, and they do not give a knowledge of the real situation. The situation of the British is undeniably unpleasant, and unless reinforced they will be compelled to succumb.

CAVALRY FIGHTING.

Lady Smith, Oct. 18.—News arrived this afternoon that the British cavalry outpost had met the enemy near Acton Homes, eight leagues from here, and also at Bester's. Firing began this morning at 10 o'clock and late this afternoon the action continues.

Some casualties are reported, but details of the engagement are meagre. Supports for the British are being forwarded. A general action is expected tomorrow.

THIRTY BOERS KILLED.

London, Oct. 19.—Turner's Lobatse correspondent says that the Boers surrounded that place Saturday, but were defeated and thirty killed. The Telegraph's Lady Smith correspondent says that the volunteers who arrived yesterday (Wednesday) from the scene of the impending battle at Acton Homes stated that a detachment of the enemy tried to cut off small parties of British who returned. The firing was very heavy, the Boers using cannon.

CAPTURED AND SACKED.

Lorenzo, Marquez, Oct. 18.—Veldt en, a Boer official at Pretoria, gives the following account of the occupation of the British camp at Ramatlabana, just north of Mafeking: "The British

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

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