

# THE WEEKLY ARGUS.

"This Argus o'er the people's rights  
Doth an eternal vigil keep;

No soothing strain of Maia's son  
Can lull its hundred eyes to sleep."

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## WHAT THE FORCE BILL IS.

The Force Bill of Two Years Ago Will be the Basis of Any Similar Bill Hereafter—The Same Idea Will be Involved in Any New Measure.

We give a synopsis of the provisions of the bill as then published, a voluminous document of seventy-six pages, and deals with the problem of securing the solid negro vote of the South to the Republican party with considerable ingenuity and an evident determination to leave no loophole by which such a result could be defeated. Professedly it applies to all the States, but no one can read it carefully without arriving at the conclusion that it could be so applied as to count the negro vote of the Southern States for the dominant party. One of the curious features of the measure is a lottery system of reaching a result where the number of ballots cast in any district is in excess of the number of voters. There is also the fullest provision for the use of troops at the polls to support the Federal supervisors, marshals and canvassing boards in the exercise of arbitrary powers for registering voters, "purging" the lists, holding elections and canvassing and returning the votes. Where State laws conflict with the operation of the bill those laws are declared to be null and void. In other words, the entire control of congressional elections is lodged in the hands of the Federal government, or, in other words, those of the dominant party.

## FEDERAL REGISTRATION.

The earlier sections of the bill, after providing that the Federal supervisors of elections shall be charged with the supervision of elections at which Representatives or Delegates in Congress are voted for, with the enforcement of the national election laws and with the prevention of frauds and irregularities in naturalization, dealt in detail with the subject of registration.

Section 2 provides that registration shall be "guarded, scrutinized and supervised" in any city or town having 20,000 inhabitants or upwards, "whether such city or town contains within its boundaries one or more congressional districts, or is only a part of one or more congressional districts", or in any one or more counties in any congressional district and forming a part only of a congressional district, or in any entire congressional district no part of which is within any city or town of 20,000 inhabitants and upwards, whenever the chief supervisor for the judicial district "in which either of the three above mentioned places is situated shall have received from the first and third of such mentioned places" (that is, a city or town and an entire congressional district), an application from 100 persons claiming to be qualified voters therein, or from fifty such persons in one or more counties or parishes, petitioning for Federal supervision.

## USE OF THE UNITED STATES COURTS.

Sections 2 to 14, inclusive, set forth the manner in which such supervision shall be exercised. Upon notice from the chief supervisor, the judge of the United States Circuit Court having jurisdiction is required within ten days to open his court at the most convenient place "for the purpose of transacting all such business pertaining to registration or election matters as may, under the laws of the United States, there be transacted and done".

If the circuit judge is unable to act he shall designate a district judge to sit in his place.

## HOW SUPERVISORS WOULD BE CHOSEN.

Supervisors of election are to be appointed by the circuit courts upon recommendation of the supervisors, who may also have deputies, to be appointed by the court. The number of supervisors for each election district or precinct shall be three, but two of whom shall be of the same political faith.

The chief supervisor is authorized to transfer his subordinates from point to point, and also to assign them, upon any other day than one of registration, revision or election, "to any other duty authorized by laws of the United States". The power of summary suspension is given the supervisor, who may fill the vacancy by the designation of another unassigned appointee of the court of the same political faith. It will be observed that the court is limited in its appointments to persons recommended by the chief supervisor, or, who, if he be an unscrupulous partisan, will take care, of course, only to recommend such persons as he can depend upon as serviceable

tools. The court is required to appoint double the whole number of supervisors, which such city, town, county, parish or entire Congressional district is entitled to the services of, and the chief supervisor may select whom he pleases from these appointees taken from the list he has recommended. One of three supervisors is to be designated by the chief supervisor as chairman, and another to act as chairman during his absence.

## CONTROL OF THE VOTING LIST.

Section eight deals specifically with the subjects of registration, naturalization, preparation of list of voters, inspection of ballot boxes, etc. The supervisors are required to attend all proceeding of registration and revision, and may challenge any person offering to register or the right of names already registered to remain on the books, with power to require the custodian of the registry book or list to mark the names so challenged. It is also made their duty to thoroughly examine, when so directed by the chief supervisor, all register lists or papers of any kind connected with the preparation of such lists, with the names added or dropped, and to make a copy of such documents. They are also required to make out lists of the persons offering to register and to mark the registry lists, etc., "in such manner as will, in his judgment, defeat and expose the improper or wrongful removal therefrom or addition thereto in any manner of any name or names." In cities or towns, where the chief supervisor requires it, the residences of all registered voters are to be verified by a house-to-house canvass. In case of challenge, if the local registration officers fail to put the oath immediately, the supervisors shall do the same and promptly pass upon the qualifications of any such challenged person. If it is decided that the challenged party is a qualified voter, his ballot must be received and deposited in the box. Thus, at any election, the supervisors may decide who shall and who shall not be permitted to vote.

## BALLOT BOXES MUST BE MARKED.

On the morning of election day the supervisors are required to examine the ballot boxes before the voting begins to see that they are empty. The local election officers, "any State, territorial or municipal law to the contrary notwithstanding," are required to label the boxes so as to indicate that the Congressional ballots are to be deposited in them and to point them out to any voter inquiring for them. The boxes are to be kept in plain sight and within easy access of the electors, and so placed as to enable the local and Federal election officers and the voters to see that the ballots are deposited in them. No ballot box may be removed from the place at which it is located until the vote has been fully counted and canvassed. Any election officer, local or Federal, who shall practice any fraud, make a false certificate or tamper with the ballots, either "stuffing" the box or extracting lawful votes therefrom, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or imprisonment not more than five years, or both. The giving, offering or receiving a bribe to or from voters or election or registration officers in connection with either registration election, subjects the offender to the same penalties. One of the Federal supervisors is required in all cases where any State or local election officer or other person at any Congressional election is permitted to accompany a voter into any booth or other place provided for the voter to prepare his ballot, to likewise enter such booth and to render such assistance in preparing the ballot as the voter shall request of him.

## HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CANVASS.

On the day of the election the supervisors must keep a poll-list of all persons voting and a separate list of all rejected voters, with the reason for such rejection. All such ballots of rejected voters, if tendered to the supervisors of election, shall be received by them, the names of the voters shall be written on the backs thereof, and the ballots then forwarded to the chief supervisor. The supervisors are also to forward returns of the election. Prior to election day in any city or town having one hundred thousand inhabitants or upwards they, must if the chief supervisor so direct, make a house-to-house canvass to ascertain the qualifications of registered voters, and in any city or town of twenty thousand inhabitants or upward, when required by the chief supervisor, prepare a list of all naturalized voters and observe and scrutinize the man-

ner in which naturalizations are being made, and aid the court in the matter of preventing fraudulent naturalization. A similar canvass may be made in towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants when a chief supervisor "shall have reason to believe that actual fraud or perjury has been, is being or is about to be committed in the matter of naturalization."

## STATE LAWS ANNULLED.

Section 9 provides that all votes for members of Congress shall be counted and certified in a prescribed way, "and any state, territorial or municipal law or ordinance in so far as it conflicts herewith is hereby annulled." All ballots must be counted by the Federal supervisors as well as by the local election officers. The poll clerks and supervisors must keep separate tallies. If they do not agree, then the chairman or acting chairman of the local election officers and the chairman or acting chairman of the federal supervisors must announce the result which each has arrived at. Congressional votes found in any other ballot box shall be counted by the local chairman and delivered to the supervisors chairman to be counted, sealed and marked.

## A LOTTERY SYSTEM FOR ELECTIONS.

If there be more votes in the congressional box than the total number of persons who have voted, the ballots are to be mingled and a local election officer and a Federal supervisor blindfolded and, with their backs to the box, shall draw ballots corresponding in number to the excess, which shall then be destroyed. The votes for the persons named in such withdrawn ballots are to be deducted from the votes entered for such persons on the tallies. It follows, of course, that an election in such a case might be determined by chance of trickery in drawing the ballots.

## HANDLING THE RETURNS.

Duplicate statements of the results of all congressional elections are to be made by local election officers and Federal supervisors, to which specimens of the ballots cast and rejected, with the number of votes for each, are to be attached. All rejected ballots shall be endorsed with a statement showing by whom each was rejected. If differences in the statements and certificates of election are found to exist, the supervisors must make a signed memorandum of the differences. The statements of the local officers are to be disposed of in accordance with State, territorial or local laws, but the statements of the supervisors, of which there to be two sets, are to be forwarded, one to the chief supervisor, who also receives the supervisors' tallies, and the other to the clerk of the United States Circuit Court. From the papers submitted to him, the chief supervisor must tabulate, for presentation to a United States board of canvassers for the congressional district, the vote for the candidates.

## POLLS CONTROLLED BY SUPERVISORS.

Section 14 states that if any election district where the law is being applied, no poles shall be opened as required by the laws of the State within one hour from the time such polls should be opened, then it shall be the duty of Federal supervisors present to open the polls for the reception of ballots for Representatives of Delegates in Congress only. "They shall conduct said election as provided by the laws of the State in which the election is held, save where the same are modified, annulled or changed by the laws of the United States." In other words, if there is a real or pretended delay of an hour in opening the polls, easily to be brought about by clever manipulation, the Federal supervisors would have the election entirely in their own hands, and the local, State or Territorial authorities are required to tabulate and declare the returns received from the supervisors, "the same as if the election had been held and conducted by the State, Territorial or local election officers."

## FEDERAL RETURNING BOARDS.

Section 15 requires the United States circuit Courts to appoint for the State to which the election law is applied three persons to be known as "The United States board of canvassers of the congressional vote within and for the State for which they shall be appointed." Not more than two of them shall belong to the same political party. They are to receive \$15 per day while actually

employed and \$5 per day additional for personal expenses. Their duty is to finally canvass and tabulate the votes for members of the House of Representatives. They may use for this purpose the documents forwarded by the supervisors to the United States courts and also those filed with the chief supervisors, where there is a discrepancy between the chief supervisors' returns and the statement and certificates received by the clerks of the courts. They are also empowered to summon and personally examine the various supervisors where their returns are imperfect or inconsistent. Such summons are to be served by the United States deputy marshals.

Three sets of certificates of the results ascertained by the board are to be made. Of these one is to be filed in the office of the chief supervisor of elections for the congressional district affected, together with the papers and documents in the case. Another is to be forwarded to the person declared to have been elected, and the third is to be mailed to the clerk of the United States House of Representatives at Washington. In case no person is found to be elected in a district, certificates of the fact are to be transmitted to the Governor of the State, the clerk of the House of Representatives and the proper chief supervisor. Any person who was a candidate for election may contest the correctness of the canvassing board's decision before the United States court, which may examine all the evidence upon which the canvassing board acted, and then determine and certify the person shown to be entitled to the certificate. The certificate of the United States canvassing board shall be conclusive with the clerk of the House of Representatives in determining who shall be placed upon the roll as elected unless the question has been decided by the circuit court, in which event he shall place on the roll as Representative elect the name of the person certified by the court. The failure, neglect or refusal of the clerk to observe this mandate is punishable by a fine of from \$1,000 to \$5,000, or imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, or both, and he shall "be forever disqualified from holding thereafter any office of trust or profit under the government of the United States." The circuit court may also examine into the correctness of the returns made by any canvassing board, national, State, territorial, county or local, and require said board to amend them.

## A MEANS OF PACKING JURIES.

A later section (38) provides for the appointment by the Circuit Court of three persons for each judicial district as United States juror commissioners, who, from time to time, are to make from the qualified voters a list of the persons who, under the laws of the United States and of the State in which they shall act, shall be eligible for jury duty, without respect to race or color, "and hereafter all panels for jurors, grand and petit, shall be drawn by said board" in the presence of a district or circuit judge.

## PAY OF POLITICAL WORKERS.

Liberal provision is made for the pay of supervisors and deputy marshals, the former receiving \$5 per day, with \$10 on election day in cities of 500,000 inhabitants or upwards, and the latter \$5 per day. The cost for pay of supervisors alone at each polling place would be \$15 per day for a period ranging from three to twelve days. The term of service of the deputy marshals is limited to eight days.

## FUNCTIONS OF DEPUTY MARSHALS.

Section 29 prescribes the duties of the deputy marshals under the bill. Besides serving the summonses of the canvassing boards, they are to assist the supervisors in making the house canvass, and as many of them as the chief supervisor may decide to be necessary are to observe the manner in which the election officers are discharging their duties, to enforce the election laws of the United States and to prevent frauds and irregularities in elections. If directed by the chief supervisor they must take charge of such returns of the canvass of votes found in any box which, under existing law, the chief supervisor may require to be made to him and deliver them into his custody. One third of the special deputy marshals appointed in any place must be taken from lists furnished by the chief supervisor.

## LOOKING TO FUTURE CONTINGENCIES.

All chief supervisors shall con-

tinue in office "so long as faithful and capable." In other words, they are life appointments, and chief supervisors appointed now would continue indefinitely to control and "guard" the elections, even though another party should obtain control of the courts and the federal executive. The chief supervisors, besides their fees as circuit court commissioners, are allowed various fees for filing and caring for papers, etc. Each of them may also have a deputy and chief clerk, to be appointed upon his own designation.

## TROOPS AT THE POLLS.

Various sections of the United States statutes are made by section 32 a part of the bill and of equal effect with its other provisions, save they are in terms changed or modified by the language of the bill itself. The most important of these is section 1989 of the Revised Statutes, which reads: "It shall be lawful for the President of the United States, or such person as he may empower for that purpose, to employ such part of the land or naval forces of the United States or the militia as may be necessary to aid in the execution of judicial process issued under any of the preceding provisions, or as shall be necessary to prevent the violation or enforcement of the due execution of the provisions of this title." Under this section, which thus becomes a part of the bill, troops may be used at the polls to enforce the orders of the supervisors. Section 2024 also empowers United States marshals to summon bystanders to their assistance in ascertaining their authority.

The other sections of the Revised Statutes incorporated are those at present specifying the duties of supervisors, providing the details for judicial processes, etc., and the sections aimed against discrimination as to color in the exercise of the elective franchise. Section 2029, prohibiting supervisors from making arrests or performing "other duties than to be in the immediate presence of the officers holding the election and to witness all their proceedings," is repealed.

## HEAVY PENALTIES FOR VARIOUS OFFENCES.

A long list of offences that might be committed at registration or revision of voting lists or at elections is given, such as intimidation at and frauds upon registration and in elections, obstruction of supervisors or registration or election officers, etc., the penalty being from one to five years imprisonment. The willful exclusion of a legal vote or receiving an illegal vote is punishable by imprisonment not more than two years. Every supervisor, election officer or member of a canvassing board who shall willfully make a false canvass, sign a false certificate or deface, destroy or conceal any certificate may be punished by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than five years. As here stated, ballot box stuffing and fraudulent changing or abstracting of ballots involve a penalty of from one to five years imprisonment. Any election or registration officer found guilty of wilful neglect or evasion of the law may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years. It is also declared to be a felony for election officers to steal, destroy, mutilate or falsify any record or document, or to secrete the same, or permit any one else to do so, the penalty being forfeiture of office and imprisonment not longer than five years. Any person abetting, procuring or advising such acts, or committing them himself is subject to the same penalty. Drastic penalties are also provided for perjury, subornation of perjury, frauds upon voters, disobedience of the supervisors, disturbances at registration offices and at the polls, stealing or destroying ballot boxes, ballots, poll lists, absenteeism by local officers, and generally the doing of any act denounced in section 5424-5428, inclusive, United States, Revised Statutes, as felony.

A GREAT many delegates passed through this city Monday on their way to Greensboro, where the State Farmers' Alliance holds its annual meeting to-day for the election of officers of the order for the ensuing year. It is a meeting that is calculated to have considerable to do with molding the political complexion of the State for the next four years. It is to be hoped that the cardinal principles of the Alliance will prevail in this council.

## MR. CRISP ON THE FORCE BILL.

Mr. Crisp, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in his letter accepting the nomination recently tendered him by the Democratic convention of his district, presents the following terse and telling summary of the force bill:

"It gives to the judge of the United States Circuit Court the power of appointing election officers in the States. It gives to the election officers so appointed the power to designate an unlimited number of deputy marshals, who may be employed a number of days prior to each election at \$5 per day. (A thousand or more might be appointed in each congressional district in Georgia.)

"It authorizes the use of the armies of the United States to preserve the peace at the polls.

"It gives to the judges of the United States Courts the power of appointing a canvassing or returning board for each State, who shall certify whom the people have elected to Congress.

"It requires the Clerk of the House of Representative to place on the roll of members elect the names of the persons holding such certificates, so that they may participate as members in the organization of the House.

"It authorizes officers of the United States to supervise and control the registration of voters.

"It authorizes such officers to make a house-to-house canvass, to ascertain the legality of any registered voter.

"It provides for the payment of all these officers out of the Federal Treasury, and authorizes the employment of many of them for as much as eight days before an election.

"And finally, it makes permanent appropriation of your money for the execution of the law."

And this is the iniquity the Third partyites, whether they intend it or not, would aid the Republican party in foisting upon the South. Could the Democrats ask a better or more comprehensive campaign document than the above? The distinguished Georgian well adds, by way of comment, that popular government could not long survive the establishment of a system which permitted the use of the army at the polling-places of the country and at the same time removed from responsibility to the people the officers who manage and control their elections.

Mr. Crisp knows whereof he speaks. He has studied the force bill in all its bearings and taken in all the dire consequences that would follow its enactment into a law.

## Picnic in the Woods.

DUDLEY, N. C., Aug. 4.  
Dear Argus: At an early hour yesterday morning vehicles of all description were to be seen passing through our quiet little town, all moving toward the public school house, which is surrounded by a beautiful oak grove on the road leading West from here, and is about one mile distant. There was no abatement of the passing of pleasure-seekers until near noon.

The occasion that called together so many of our beautiful, blushing maidens and gallant, chivalrous young men was a picnic given by a few of the neighborhood boys. On reaching the grounds and taking in the gay scene, everything seemed to be indicative of comfort and pleasure.

The arrival of the Mt. Olive Cornet Band was an attraction that had charms for all, and the woods resounded the echo of the melodious strains of music that lent inspiration to the whole assembly. The Band was ably assisted by prominent musicians of your city.

The dinner was served about 12:30 and was in keeping with the rest of the programme. Everyone present had an excellent opportunity to satisfy any feelings of hunger that might have arisen during the day.

After dinner a large majority of the crowd repaired to the school house and revelled in the intoxicating pleasures of the dance until the sun was sinking behind the trees.

State Auditor Sanderlin was present, but had to retire early in the afternoon on account of indisposition.

The most pleasant memories will be cherished by those who participated in the enjoyable picnic.

Respectfully,  
P. R. W.