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THE NEW ORLEANS RIOT.

Communication to President Johnson from Lieutenant Governor Voorhees, General Herron and Mayor Monroe.

New Orleans, August 7, 1866.

The following correspondence is published.

His Excellency President Andrew Johnson:

Sir: Your Excellency is already in possession of the main facts in regard to the conspiracy which, by reviving the convention of 1864, purposed to subvert the civil government of Louisiana. An informal meeting of twenty nine members, one hundred and fifty being the whole number and seventy six a quorum, proceeded to depose the President of the convention, who considered the convention itself extinct and himself without functions of office, and to elect R. K. Howell as President *pro tem*. They adjourned to meet again, and a proclamation was issued by the President *pro tem*, convening the convention to meet on the 30th of July last, and directing his Excellency the Governor of the State to issue writs of election to fill vacancies. So far the whole matter was looked upon as a harmless experiment, though mischief was intended, the people being confident that the Governor would not condescend to notice this proclamation, and that, in case the convention should commit any act of interference, he would at once have it dispersed. Unfortunately, however, after a lapse of nearly a month, the Governor issued writs of election to fill up fifty-one vacancies in that body.

This document, to which the Secretary of State refused to give his attestation under the seal of State, was issued under the attestation of the private secretary of the Governor. The people of the State became alarmed, when no doubt could be entertained as to the fact that their Chief Magistrate had given willing aid and assistance to subvert the government, the preservation of which was especially entrusted to his keeping.

On Friday, the 27th of July, a large meeting was held in the hall of the House of Representatives, professedly for the advocacy of universal suffrage, but in reality to re-organize for the meeting of the Convention on the Monday following. The objects of the meeting was to excite the passions and prejudices of the colored population, so as to make them the victims of a riot, by urging them headlong into a conflict with the State and municipal authorities.

On the other hand, we were determined to prevent riot and bloodshed by pursuing such a course as would baffle the nefarious calculations of those agitators from New Orleans.

Our remedy, and the only remedy, must be by recourse to the usual process of law, and even then to proceed in such manner as to fasten upon them the responsibilities of all collision whatever. The case was submitted to the Grand Jury by the Attorney General, and in the meantime the Lieutenant Governor and the Mayor called upon General Baird to ascertain whether, if a warrant, issued upon a regular indictment, were placed in the hands of the Sheriff for the arrest of the members of the Convention, the military would interfere. The answer was that the Sheriff would be arrested, and that the Convention, meeting peaceably, could not be interfered with by the officers of the law.

It is proper here to state that the Mayor had previously addressed a note to General Baird, inquiring whether he would be interfered with by the military in case he would proceed to disperse the Convention as an unlawful assemblage. The answer to this communication was that the meeting of the Convention, being peaceable, could not be suppressed by the Mayor, and that the military authorities would prevent the interference of the civil authorities. It was suggested by the Lieutenant Governor that the city authorities under those circumstances did not intend to interfere to prevent the meeting of the Convention. But he proposed that in case a warrant of arrest was placed in the hands of the Sheriff,

the latter, before attempting to execute it, would call on the General, who thereupon would endorse his objections, and the matter would at once be submitted to the President. This arrangement was satisfactory to both parties. On the same day, the Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor telegraphed to the President, to ascertain whether the process of the court to arrest the members of the Convention could be thwarted by the military. The answer was expected to sustain the court.

On Sunday, the 29th, the State and municipal authorities called upon the President to advise the people as to the proper conduct to be held next day so as to avoid all collision and riot; and the Mayor issued his proclamation to the same effect. The press of the city, with the exception of the Radical organ, gave wise and salutary counsels to the people, inviting all good citizens to avoid congregations about the capitol and to demean themselves with prudence and discretion.

On the morning of the 30th the Lieutenant Governor called upon General Baird to communicate to him the President's despatch, and also inquired of the General if he would not have some troops in the vicinity of the hall, to preserve peace and good order. General Baird answered that application had been made by members of the Convention.

The suggestion was then made that to have too large a police force on the spot might be construed as means to overawe the members, and inasmuch as the civil authorities did not intend interfering with the Convention until instructions were received from the President, as above agreed upon. It was proper to have troops to co-operate with a small police force to preserve peace, and prevent all possible attempts to bring about a collision. This suggestion met the approval of the General, who then stated that he would immediately give orders to have the troops in readiness. Before the end of the interview it was again agreed upon between General Baird and the Lieutenant Governor that whatever warrant of arrest might be placed in the hands of the Sheriff would be submitted to him before any attempt to have it executed should be made, and that upon the endorsement of the General's objections the matter would be referred to the President. The Mayor being informed of this arrangement, sent but a small police force to the hall, and the troops that were to act in conjunction with the police were eagerly expected.

At noon, information having reached the Lieutenant Governor that in the third district there was a commencement of effervescence and that a large number of negroes were coming towards Canal street from above and below, he immediately sent a despatch to the General conveying this intelligence and urging that the troops be sent without delay.

About one hour afterwards the riot broke out, ending in the dispersion of the convention and the capture of the rioters, including several members of this body. It is not our purpose to argue the question of the facts as to the actual commencement of the collision, and fix precisely the mode and manner and where it started. We will, however, remark that the collision was brought about by the armed mob sustaining the convention. Suffice it to say that the civil authorities took all the precautions possible to prevent the outbreak; that they applied during three days previous to have the military to preserve order at the place where the convention was to meet; that the authorities, State and municipal, came to an understanding to act in concert with the military for that purpose; that the citizens no more than the police contemplated preventing the convention from holding their meeting in peace and adjourning and dispersing unmolested; and that the warrant for their arrest would have been submitted to the military, as agreed upon, although the President's despatch to the Lieutenant Governor and the subsequent one to the Attorney General was imperative, that the military must not thwart the

convention. The military authorities had been for three days previous to the riot in constant communication with the Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor, with a view to prevent the impending riot. The efforts were unsuccessful and could not counteract the incendiary counsels and appeals of those who for sinister purposes had in view this very result in order to reap a political harvest. That the civil authorities have done their duty in this respect is patent. That more could have been done by them is impossible, as they were not allowed to remove the cause of the riot by taking proper means to prevent the meeting of the Convention, and we doubt not for a moment that the military commander himself will be the first to corroborate these facts, and to arrest all calumnious imputations against the conduct of our people under these trying circumstances.

As regards the proclamation of martial law, the least that can be said is that it was inopportune, as the rioting had ceased completely, the police being masters of the situation.

The colored population, as a body, did not participate in these disgraceful scenes, and the freedmen in the vicinity of the riot were standing as lookers on without being molested. The colored mob, in union with a few white rioters who were leading them in the affair, were no doubt well organized. That they were well armed is undoubted, as forty-two policemen and several citizens were either killed or wounded by them, although the conflict was over in less than two hours.

Twenty-seven rioters were killed and a considerable number wounded.

At dark, when all was over, when those of the mob were either dispersed or in prison, when tranquility and order were restored, martial law was proclaimed, and the prisons where the rioters were confined emptied by orders from headquarters. These measures undoubted were not intended to revive the hopes of the outlaws; but were they not calculated to inspire them with false hopes? The very next morning the organ of the agitators was issued, containing, as usual, the most inflammatory articles, and so the succeeding issues. Had the military on Monday afternoon taken a stand to co-operate with the civil authorities, instead of proclaiming martial law, the most beneficial effects would have been the result. We remain, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

ALBERT VOORHIES, Lieut. Gov. of La.
A. S. HERRON, Attorney General of La.
J. T. MONROE, Mayor of New Orleans.

From the New York Journal of Commerce.

THE NEW ORLEANS RIOT.

There can be no justification for any class of those who took part in the disgraceful scenes which marked the 30th of July at New Orleans; but there will doubtless be some division of sentiment in awarding to each its due proportion of the blame for these sad occurrences. The convention of 1864, called to revise and amend the Constitution of Louisiana, having finished its business, was duly adjourned. Previous to its dissolution, a motion was carried that when it was adjourned it should be to the call of its president. Most well informed persons believe that this resolution had no binding force, and that this body could not thus provide for a renewal of its legal existence. A large number of the members who were known as Radicals, and who were supposed to favor the policy of negro suffrage, desired Mr. E. H. Durell, who had been the president of the convention, to call it together again in order to take action upon the amendments to the Constitution recently proposed by Congress. This gentleman declined, however, to issue any such call, on the ground that he had no power in the premises, as the convention had terminated its legal existence by adjournment. Upon this refusal, the members held an informal meeting and appointed a president *pro tem*, who issued a call for the convention to assemble on Monday, the 30th of July.

Public feeling in New Orleans was very much excited in view of this convocation.

Few, we think, will contend that the assembly thus convened had any proper attributes of a legal body; and to this cause for excitement there was added the avowed purpose on the part of its members to disfranchise every person in the State who had aided the rebellion, and to give universal suffrage to the negroes. The proclamation of the Mayor, ostensibly designed to prevent any disturbance, was not wisely conceived, and very likely added fuel to the flame. A charge had been made that the military were likely to interfere with the convention, and for this reason, doubtless, their leader was more slow to act than the occasion required. The opening of the assembly was the signal for processions of excited negroes, who expected great things from the convention, and who marched through the streets with music and banners, and other demonstrations of joy. With such inflammable materials an explosion was almost inevitable; and the first collision between a portion of the procession and an excited citizen was the signal for a general riot. We are not surprised at the course of the Radicals. They have always been turbulent and factious, and regardless of constitutional rights or legal restraints when these stood in the way of their designs. If they did not expressly desire the outbreak, their proceedings were well calculated to provoke it, and they doubtless expected, if it occurred, that it would serve their cause.

The conservative citizens of New Orleans should have taken more prompt and thorough precautions to prevent a collision, and they are much to blame for this sad result. They know both the reckless folly of the Radicals and the excitability of the poor negroes, and they should have adopted such measures as the occasion required. Those who attacked the convention and exhibited a ferocious thirst for blood, are the worst enemies of the South, although professing to be its more ardent friends. They take counsel always of their resentments or their passions instead of their judgment, and they are perpetually bringing reproach upon the land they would die to serve. While there is no justification on either side for such outbreaks of popular violence, all good citizens may well join in doing what they can to remove the cause of so much trouble. We hope that those who have been determined to force upon the country a universal suffrage, without distinction of color, will see the difficulties in the way of their mad project, and will abandon it before the land is deluged with blood. Even if it could be peacefully inaugurated, wherever each of the two races were numerous and kept from commingling, it must lead, sooner or later, to the same disastrous conflict.

From the New York Tribune.

Mr. Davis—His Complicity in the Assassination Plot.

A Philadelphia paper publishes the following letter received in that city in reference to the remark made by Jefferson Davis at Charlotte, on receiving the despatch announcing President Lincoln's assassination, as given in the testimony of Mr. Bates during the trial of the assassins. The writer is a Northern man, a near relative of a distinguished officer of the Northern army, and a federal office-holder. He says:

"We have just heard of the surrender of Gen. Lee's army. The Methodist missionary who first brought the news, narrowly escaped the guard-house when he related it. Soon after a cavalry escort approached the town, headed by a civilian, soon recognized as Mr. Davis. He stopped at the house of Mr. Bates, an agent of Adams Express Company, where he had been invited by telegraph. I was within a few feet of the door when he alighted from his horse, and, ascending the steps, he made a short address. Not a word was said about Mr. Lincoln's death, for nothing of it was then known. The door of the house being locked, there was a slight delay afterward.

"As he remained in this position, an agent of the telegraph office passed me,