

## FOR ALL VOTERS.

### PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, DRAWN BY MR. WINSTON.

Must Be Able to Read and Write or Have \$300 Worth of Property, Have Been Able to Vote Prior to January 1867, or Have Been a Union Soldier.

The most important bill so far introduced in the Legislature, and one that will perhaps cause most interesting discussion, is "An Act to Amend the Constitution of North Carolina, in regard to suffrage, introduced in the House by Mr. Winston, of Bertie, and referred to a special Committee on Election Law.

It is modeled after the Louisiana law, but has some important points of difference. It provides for a constitutional amendment to be voted on in May 1900 at a general election, the time for State elections being changed to that date. It has an education qualification, or in lieu of that a property qualification (\$300); in lieu of both these qualifications it admits to registration all people who voted in the United States, as far back as January 1, 1867, or who prior to that time was a regularly enlisted soldier in the army of the United States, or a son or grandson of any such persons not less than 21 years old at the date of the adoption of this constitution. It is also provided that every voter must have paid his poll tax for two years previous to the time at which he offers to vote, and be able to show his tax receipt in proof thereof.

The full text of the bill, with all its provisions is as follows:

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact—

Section 1. That Section 22 of article 1 of the Constitution of North Carolina be, and the same is hereby repealed.

Section 2. That article of the Constitution of North Carolina be, and the same is hereby repealed, and in its stead shall be substituted the following article or said constitution, and sections thereof:

#### ARTICLE VI.

##### SUFFRAGE AND ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Section 1. Qualifications of an Elector: Every male person in the United States, and every male person who has been naturalized, twenty-one years old, or upwards, who shall have been an actual bona fide resident in the State of North Carolina for two years and possessing all the qualifications set out and required in this article and its various sections, shall be entitled to vote at any election, by the people of the State, except as may be herein otherwise provided.

Section 2. Every person, qualified to vote, shall have been an actual bona fide resident of the State of North Carolina for two years, of the county one year, and of the precinct, ward or other election district, in which he proposes to vote, six months next preceding the election; provided, that removal from one precinct, ward or other election district to another, in the same county, shall not operate to deprive any person of the right to vote in the precinct, ward, or other election district from which he has removed, until six months after such removal. But no person that has been convicted, or confessed his guilt in open court upon indictment of the following crimes: Bribery, burglary in any degree, larceny, receiving stolen goods, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, rape, assault to commit rape, fornication and adultery, bigamy, incest, removing crop before paying rent or before rent or before satisfying liens thereon, disposing of mortgaged property with intent to defraud the mortgagee, crime against nature, sale of sale of cotton within prohibited hours, dueling, gambling, conducting a lottery, injuries to houses, churches and fences, shooting at or throwing into cars, locomotives or trains, slander of an innocent woman, seduction under promise of marriage, or of an attempt to commit any of said offenses, or of any felony now prohibited by the laws of North Carolina, or which may hereafter be prohibited, or of any crime whereof the punishment may be imprisonment in the penitentiary; shall be permitted to vote or be deemed an elector, unless the said person shall be first restored to citizenship in a manner prescribed by law. And it shall not be necessary that any punishment has been imposed to bring persons within the prohibition of this section. Those under suspended judgment are prohibited, as well as those under sentence.

Section 3. Every person offering to vote in an election held by the people in the State, shall be, at the time he offers to vote, a legally enrolled and registered voter on his personal application in the manner herein prescribed, and as provided by the laws enacted in accordance with this article, and no person shall be allowed to vote without registration as herein provided.

The qualification of voters and the registration laws in force in North Carolina on the first day of April, 1899, shall be and remain in force until the first day of June, 1900, at which date all the provisions of the constitution relating to suffrage, registration and election, as contained in this article, and as herein provided, shall go into effect, and the General Assembly of North Carolina shall at its regular session in 1900, enact a general registration law to carry into effect the provisions of this article relating to the registration of such voters only as are qualified under this article and its section.

Section 4. All elections by the people shall be by ballot, and all elections

by the General Assembly shall be viva voce.

Section 5. Every person presenting himself for registration shall be able to read and write intelligently, and he shall demonstrate his ability to do so, when he applies for registration, by making under oath, administered to him by the officer having charge of such registration, or by his deputy, both of whom are hereby authorized to administer such oath, written application therefor upon a blank to be furnished by such officer.

"The said application shall contain the essential facts necessary to show that he is entitled to register and vote, and shall be entirely written, dated and signed by him, in the presence of the registration officer or his deputy, without assistance or suggestion from any person or memorandum whatever except the form of the application hereinafter set forth.

The application for registration, above provided for, shall be an exact copy of the following form, with the proper names, dates and numbers substituted for the blanks appearing hereinafter in wit:

"I am a resident of the State of North Carolina and a citizen of the United States. My name is ..... I was born in the State of ..... county of ..... on the ..... day of ..... in the year of ..... I am now ..... years and ..... months and ..... days of age. I have resided in this State since ..... in the county since ..... and in the precinct (or ward or other election district) since ..... and I am not disfranchised by any of the provisions of the Constitution of this State."

Section 6. If the said applicant, for registration, be not able to read and write, as provided by section 5 of this article, then he shall be entitled to register and vote, if he shall, at the time he offers to register, be the actual and bona fide owner of property, assessed to him in the State, at a valuation of not less than three hundred dollars on the tax lists of the current year in which he offers to register, or on the tax list of the preceding year if the roll of the current year shall not have been completed and filed, and on which, if the said property so assessed be personal only, all taxes due thereon shall have been paid. The applicant for registration under this section shall make oath before the registration officer or his deputy, that he is a citizen of the United States, a resident of this State, over the age of twenty-one years, that he possesses the qualifications prescribed in section 5 of this article, and that he can neither read nor write and that he is the owner of property assessed to him in this State at a valuation of not less than three hundred dollars, and if such property be personal only, that all taxes thereon have been paid.

Section 7. No male person, who was, on January 1st, 1867, or at any date prior thereto, entitled to vote under the Constitution or Statutes of any State in the United States wherein he then resided; or who, prior to that time was a regular enlisted soldier in the army of the United States, and no son or grandson of any such person not less than twenty-one years old at the date of the adoption of this Constitution; and no male person who was naturalized prior to the first day of January, 1900, shall be denied the right to register and vote in this State by reason of his failure to possess the educational or property qualifications prescribed by this Constitution, provided he will have resided in this State for five years next preceding the date at which he shall apply for registration and shall have registered in accordance with the terms of this article prior to September 1st, 1900, and no person shall be entitled to register under this section after said date.

Every person claiming the benefit of this section shall make application to the proper registration officer, or his deputy for registration, and he shall make oath before such registration officer or his deputy, in the following form, to wit:

"I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of North Carolina, over the age of twenty-one years; I have resided in this State for five years next preceding this date. I was on the ..... day of ..... entitled to vote under the Constitution, or Statutes of the State of ..... wherein I then resided, (or I was a regular enlisted soldier prior to 1867, in the army of the United States) or (I am the son, or grandson, of ..... who was on the ..... day of ..... entitled to vote under the Constitution or Statutes of the State of ..... wherein he then resided) or (who was, prior to 1867, a regular enlisted soldier in the army of the United States), and I desire to avail myself of the privilege conferred by section 7, of article 6, of the Constitution of this State."

A separate registration under this section shall be kept by the registration officer, who shall at the close of the registration in the year 1900, make a sworn copy in duplicate of the list of persons registered under this section, showing, in detail, whether the applicant registered as a voter of 1867, or prior thereto, or as a son of such voter, or as a grandson of such voter, or as a soldier in the army of the United States prior to 1867, or was the son of such soldier, or was the grandson of such soldier; and the registration officer shall deposit one of said duplicates in the office of the Secretary of State to be by him recorded and preserved as a part of the permanent records of his office, and the other of said duplicate he shall file with the clerk of the Superior Court of his county, to be by him recorded in a book he shall provide for that purpose and in his office to remain a permanent record.

All persons whose names appear on said list shall be admitted to register for all elections in this State without possessing the educational or property

qualifications prescribed by the Constitution, unless otherwise disqualified and all persons who do not by personal application claim exemption from sections 5 and 6 of this article before September 1st, 1900, shall be forever denied the right to do so.

The Legislature shall at its first session after the adoption of this Constitution provide the manner upon which the persons whose names appear upon said registration lists, shall hereafter register, which mode may be different from that required for persons registering under the other sections of this article, and shall also at said session provide a remedy whereby the names of any persons, who may have obtained registration under this section by false statement of fact or other fraud, shall by appropriate proceedings be stricken from said roll.

Section 8. No person less than sixty years of age shall be permitted to vote at any election held by the people of this State who shall not in addition to the qualifications in this article prescribed have paid on or before December 31st of each year, for the two years preceding the year in which he offers to vote, the poll tax assessed against him for those years, which tax is imposed on every male resident of the State between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years, not herein exempt.

Every person liable for such tax, shall before being allowed to vote exhibit to the election officer his poll tax receipt for two years issued in the official form or proof of payment of such poll taxes may be made by the affidavit of the persons who collected the same.

It is hereby declared to be a forgery and punishable as such for any tax collector, sheriff or other person to antedate or alter a poll tax receipt. Any person who shall pay the poll tax of another or advance him money for that purpose in order to secure his vote, shall be guilty of bribery and punished accordingly.

The provisions of this section as to the payment of poll taxes shall not apply to persons who are deaf and dumb, or blind, nor to persons under twenty-three years of age, who have paid all poll taxes assessed against them or to idiots or lunatics. This section shall not go into effect and operation until after the State election of 1900, and the Legislature elected in the year 1902 shall have authority to modify or repeal the same by the concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each House of the General Assembly.

Section 9. Every voter in North Carolina, except as in this article disqualified, shall be eligible to office, but before entering upon the duties of the office he shall take and subscribe, the following oath: "I ..... do solemnly swear that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina, not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as ..... So help me God."

Section 10. The following classes of persons shall be disqualified for office: First. All persons who deny the being of Almighty God. Second. All persons who shall have been convicted, or confessed their guilt on indictment pending, and whether sentenced or not, or under judgment suspended, or any treason or felony, or any other crime for which the punishment may be imprisonment in the penitentiary, since becoming citizens of the United States, of corruption and malpractice in office, unless such person shall be restored to the rights of citizenship in a manner prescribed by law.

Section 3. That said amendment to the Constitution of the State shall be submitted to the people for ratification on the Tuesday after the first Monday in May, 1900. And it shall be the duty of the poll keepers at said election to open the polls at the hour of eight o'clock in the morning, and to close the same at five o'clock in the afternoon, during which time all persons qualified to vote according to the Constitution, may vote for, or against said amendment; those desiring to vote for such amendment, to vote with a written or printed ticket "For Amendment," and those with a contrary opinion to vote with a written or printed ticket "Against Amendment."

Section 4. The election provided for in the preceding section, shall be conducted in the same manner and under the same rules and regulations as is provided in the law regulating elections in this State and in force May 1st, 1899.

Section 5. The election officers shall provide for each election precinct, ward or other voting district a ballot box in which shall be deposited the ballots "for" or "against" said amendment. The ballots so cast shall be counted, canvassed and returned as is provided by law in cases of members of the General Assembly, and under like penalties in case of default on the part of all officers, judges of election and returning officers. And abstracts of the vote upon said amendment shall be held with the clerk of the Superior Court of each county with the other abstracts of votes cast at said election, and the clerk of the Superior Court shall record such abstracts and send a certified copy thereof to the Secretary of State, who shall record the same.

Section 6. The State Board of Canvassers, or other body charged with deciding the result of the election of State officers, shall at the time of comparing the votes for State officers compare the votes "for" and "against" the said amendment, and it shall appear that a majority of the votes polled are in favor of the said amendment, the Governor of the State shall forthwith issue his proclamation, announcing the result, and shall cause to be endorsed on the said amendment as endorsed by the two Houses of the General Assembly, or annexed thereto, a certificate, under his signature, declaring that the said amendment has been ratified by the people. The Secretary

of State shall countersign the said certificate and annex thereto the Great Seal of the State, and the said amendment so enrolled with the certificate aforesaid, shall be forever kept among the archives of the State, in the office of the Secretary of State, as aforesaid.

#### Spoooner Didn't Exactly Recognize It.

While Senator Caffery, of Louisiana, was making his great constitutional arguments against expansion last Friday, there were exactly six Senators on the floor, and they were engaged in their correspondence and other official duties. Among them was Mr. Spooner, of Wisconsin, who, having finished reading the New York papers and having nothing else to do, thought he would be a little polite and exhibit some interest in the speech. When this amiable idea occurred to him, Mr. Caffery was reading with great emphasis from a small book he held in his hand, and to show his friendly disposition Mr. Spooner, who had not been paying the slightest attention, arose and inquired with great interest: "May I ask the title of the book from which the Senator from Louisiana is reading?"

Senator Caffery looked up with an air of amazement and in a most sarcastic manner retorted: "From the constitution of the United States."—Washington correspondence Chicago Record.

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