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**THE SENTINEL**  
Address of the Central Executive Committee,

to the People of North Carolina:

The Central Executive Committee of the Democratic-Conservative Party, here assembled and called upon to address the people at this time, upon matters of grave public concern, and they venture to trust that what they say will receive the candid consideration of every citizen.

The Legislature at its last session, made provision by which to enable the people of the State on the first Thursday in August, in a popular vote, to call a Convention, and elect delegates to the same, for the purpose of amending the State Constitution. The property and wisdom of this measure cannot be seconded or disputed, and we consider the cause thus generated.

The defects in the present Constitution, are many and so manifest, that almost every person of ordinary intelligence, without reference to party affiliations, would decide that it needs to be materially altered and amended.

The organic law of the State should be so plain, precise, harmonious and logical in its form and terms, that the plainest man may understand it, and as to leave as little as possible to inference and legislative and judicial construction. It is intended and ought to be the bower of the people's rights and liberties. To the extent that any of its provisions are left vague, more or less ambiguous, to that extent, the State becomes a den of iniquity, and the law becomes a den of iniquity.

The Constitution is flagrantly liable to such objections; it is hazy, illegal, contradictory and absurd in many of its most material provisions, so much so, that a wise and learned lawyer has said, if upon his sworn opinion, that it is a mass of confusions and contradictions.

The compass of this address will not allow us to enter into two illustrations of the truth of what we say.

The Constitution requires in one section that the Legislature shall provide for adequate taxation for the payment of the interest on the public debt and the debt due.

In another section it provides that the capital tax shall not exceed two dollars on the head for State and county purposes, and that the tax on three hundred dollars worth of property shall not exceed the tax on the head.

If these provisions are to be taken according to their terms and any reasonable construction, an impossibility is required, because, in accordance of taxation, the whole property of the State, together with the capital tax, is not sufficient to pay the interest of the public debt recognized by the very Constitution that framed the Constitution, to say nothing of the ordinary expenses of government.

Because of this absurdity, our Supreme Court have held that the last provision above mentioned did not apply to the debt of the State as it existed at the adoption of the Constitution. The Court was able to make some decision, they might do, and thus virtually make one of the most important provisions in the Constitution which turns the Legislature loose on the people.

Another section provides, that "the Superior Courts of the State shall be *at all times open* for the transaction of all business within their jurisdiction, except the trial of issues of fact requiring a jury." Another section provides for taxes. So, too, poor Judge, each of them for a court embracing about eight counties, so that it is physically impossible to keep the courts open, unless the Judge shall have *deputies*, an unheard of thing in all systems of justice, and no provision is made for such deputies.

This absurdity had to meet; and the Supreme Court was driven to a conclusion, which virtually strikes out a material provision of the Constitution and one that is at the root of our present judicial system. While the Superior Courts are required by the Constitution to be open *at all times* for all business, except the trial of issues of fact by a jury, an act of the Legislature provided that certain business, which is really the larger and more important part of the business of the Superior Courts, shall be transacted only at the annual terms, and such a one as will be worthy the descendants of a noble army.

The method adopted for calling the Convention is eminently proper, indeed, we undertake to say that it is the only one that fully harmonizes with the great democratic principle underlying American government, the right of the people to rule, and especially to make, amend and control their own organic law.

The method adopted is founded upon the great principle of popular government common to all the States of the Union, and is in perfect harmony with every provision, as well as the spirit of our present State Constitution.

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There are other serious objections that we never now point out, but which are worthy the more serious consideration of every citizen of the State, the remedy for all which is in the air, is a Convention of true hearted native North Carolinians.

Our Constitution would not be what it is now if our own people had framed it. It is the hand-work, in great measure, of ignorant, unprincipled adventurers, who had not the inclination to consult the wants, tastes, and necessities of the people, nor the capacity to put together disjointed parts, and fragments taken from other State Constitutions.

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