THE HENDERSON PIONEER.

"NO NORTH, NO SOUTH, NO EAST, NO WEST—OUR WHOLE COUNTRY."

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THE HENDERSON PIONEER.

By A. H. Jones.

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SPEECH OF R. P. DICK,

OF GUILFORD COUNTY.

Made in the Convention on the 2d day of June, upon MR. McDONALD'S *Resolutions declaring the state of the country, &c.*

[Reported by C. H. Ferrell of the N. Y. Herald, and revised by Mr. Dick.]

MR. PRESIDENT:—This Convention was called together for the purpose of restoring North Carolina to full connection with the government of the United States. We will be recreant to duty unless that great purpose is accomplished, or we make every reasonable effort to complete our work. If we adjourn and leave the State in her present strange and anomalous condition, a deeper gloom will settle upon the minds of our people; and the difficulties and dangers which now surround and embarrass us, will be greatly increased. One of the most important political contests ever known in history, is now carried on between Congress and the President, and we cannot be indifferent spectators, as the issue of that contest decides our destiny for weal or for woe. If we would aid our friend, the President, our stern, stubborn and sullen acquiescence must give way to a spirit of cheerful and heartfelt loyalty. Any course of conduct that weakens the hands of our friends, and strengthens our political enemies, is impolitic, unwise, and even dangerous

In entering upon this discussion, I desire to express my opinion upon many questions of great public interest which may be legitimately introduced into this debate. These are times when new and important questions are to be discussed and promptly decided—We have no precedents to guide our actions, and we must be influenced by patriotic impulses, and calm and deliberate judgment. We are the representatives of the people, and we must endeavor fully to comprehend the situation of affairs, and then rise equal to every emergency. We must not follow the promptings of selfish ambition, or be controlled by the passions and prejudices of the past; for vital interests are at stake, and a new destiny is before us. We must show ourselves to be patriots and not mere partisans. We are now arraigned before the bar of public opinion, and we must speak and act wisely, consistently and patriotically if we expect to obtain the confidence and regard of either the government or the people. Great events have crowded upon us with wonderful rapidity, and we must shrink from no responsibility which they impose. I feel fully the difficulties and embarrassments of our present position.—The dark and bloody past is behind us, and it is hard, hard to forget, for it is so full of misfortunes and sad memories. The voices of nature speak to our hearts and wake our deepest and fiercest passions—but true wisdom tells us to forget them, if we would have a peaceful and prosperous future.

We must all know that there can be no prosperity and freedom in North Carolina until the State is completely restored to full connection with the government of the United States. This State was one of the glorious thirteen of revolutionary fame, and she once occupied the proud position of equality among her peers. Then she had all the elements of greatness, and her people were free, prosperous and happy. She had a constitution which secured all the great principles of liberty. She had a system of good and wise laws that were speedily and justly administered. She had a public credit that held high position in all the money markets of the world. She had a school system that was rapidly increasing public virtue and intelligence, and in every way she was moving on in the grand march of educational, political and social progress. But in an evil hour, controlled by unavoidable circumstances and unwise counsels, she broke loose from the government which she had so long protected, honored and loved, and for four years her history has been full of sorrows and misfortunes Fifty thousand of her best and bravest children are now either the mutilated objects of simpathy, or they sleep in untimely graves. Her government is almost without vitality and power. Her courts are no longer the forms of speedy justice. Her munificent school fund has vanished like a dream, and her public credit is bankrupt. Her labor system has been overturned, and her fertile fields no longer yield their abundant treasures to well regulated industry. The private fortunes of her people have been scattered like chaff before the whirlwind, and their energy and enterprise have been crushed by frequent disaster, and now in humiliation and poverty they have to struggle for a bare existence.

Our situation is certainly gloomy and depressing, but our future destiny depends much upon our own action. What, then, is our duty? We must restore peace at home. We are informed by high authority that a house divided against itself cannot prosper. We must cease to quarrel with one another, and cultivate kindness of feeling. We must not indulge in crimination and recrimination for past differences of opinion. We must forgive one another if we hope to be forgiven. I want to see our people united on the broad and enduring political principles of devotion to the State and loyalty to the general government. These two feelings are by no means inconsistent, but together, they constitute true American patriotism. I will say here to-day, what I would say before the Congress of the United States, or any where else, that I love North Carolina better than any other spot upon which the sun light of heaven has fallen.

In reconstructing our State government we must adapt our constitution and laws to the emergiences of the times, and then we must faithfully enforce and obey them. The wealth and prosperity of our people can only be restored by labor. We must all go to work in earnest. With energy and intelligent industry we must develope our agricultural, mechanical and mineral resources.

We have the same great treasure, house of Gold, out of which our ancestors dug the wealth which they transmitted to us, and if we will labor we too can gather the rich gifts of prosperity. In society and in legisiation we must create inducements to prevent the emigration of our people and invite foreign capital, energy and enterprise. We must give a glad and cordial welcome to all those who come to help us. We must not treat them as strangers and aliens, but we must take them into our houses, and esteem them as our friends and benefactors.

We have a great work to perform, and it ought to call forth the highest qualities of the mind and heart. Our noble old State clothed in the sackloth of mourning, is prostrate in the dust of humiliation and poverty, and we must restore her to the high position which she deserves to occupy. If we will do our duty as men, as patriots, and as citizens, the great work can and will be accomplished, and a decade will not pass before the waste places of our land will rejoice in beauty and abundance, and although our people may be saddened by many a dark memory they will be content and prosperous.

Mr. President, I now propose to take a brief survey of the field of present political discussion and try to show the true position of North Carolina and reply to some of the objections made to her restoration to the benefits and priviliges of the Union. She was once a member of the Union and enjoyed to the full extent her constitutional rights. She entered into that compact of States by the free and voluntary act of her people, and she had no reserved right to secede therefrom at her own will and pleasure. A contrary doctrine would be perfectly suicidal to any government formed by a confederation of States.

The Articles of Confederation had proved by a short experience to be a complete failure in uniting, harmonizing and strengthing the various States that composed that form of government. The wisdom of our forefathers had been enlarged and matured by the experiences of the revolution, and they plainly saw that the new republic could not be permanent, prosperous and powerful without a strong Constitutional bond of Union. With the eye of political prophesy they looked down the distant future, they saw the difficulties and dangers that were in the way of the nation's prosperity and greatness, and they with confidence and hope established the Constitution, to make a perfect Union. Their object was to make a perpetual Union, and no reasonable man can believe that they incorporated in the Constitution the principle of secession, the very seeds of death.

I have always believed that the doctrine of secession was wrong, and any attempt to carry it out was a high political crime. The right of revolution is inherent in the people in every form of government, but the exercise of that right can only be justified when the people are suffering from intolerable grievances and unwarranted oppression. The recent rebellion was an effort to carry out the doctrine of secession, and was never claimed by our leaders as an attempted revolution, as they well knew that it could not be justified before the world, for the constitution was observed, the laws were faithfully administered, and the Southern people enjoyed an excess of happiness, wealth and liberty.

A large majority of the people of North Carolina were opposed both to secession and revolution, as they loved the government of their fathers with an ardor of patriotism which was excelled by no other people. A combination of circumstances which could not be controlled forced North Carolina into the rebellion. I will not now enumerate these circumstances, as they are matters of public history, but I venture the assertion that there is no State, I care not how loyal it may claim to be, that would have acted differently under the same condition of things. There are stern laws of necessity which neither States nor individuals can successfully resist. Self-preservation is the first great law that nature teaches to man, and States if true to themselves will obey it.

The storm of rebellion had risen in the surrounding States, and if North Carolina had resisted, she would have been the first victim of its fury. Civil war would have filled the land with conflagration and slaughter, and the devastating armies of both sections would have made her a place of smouldering ruins

North Carolina, by her act of rebellion, did not dissolve her connextion with the Union.—This was the position of President Lincoln, and it was maintained by his administration during the progress of the rebellion. This was the rallying cry that [illegible] the immense masses of the [illegible] The object of [illegible] war, wasn't it?

the North was to maintain it; and the North was successful, and the Union was preserved. North Carolina is still in the Union, but she does not occupy the same position as the loyal States, for the rebellion has temporaily restricted her privileges and paralyzed her powers, and she can be properly held in that condition, until her people, by act and spirit, have shown themselves truly loyal; and then she ought to be restored to all her rights.—It is a well-established principle in the law of nations, as laid down by Vattel, in his learned and elegant treatise on that subject, that it is the paramount duty of a government to preserve itself from destruction, and when that is done, as soon as possible, restore all of its parts to full vigor. As soon as North Carolina establishes the fact of the true loyalty of her people, it is the bounden duty of the Federal government to accord to them all the rights and privileges of the Constitution and the Union. I also believe that it is the duty of the government to crush out every vestige of secession and disloyalty. The Union of the States must be preserved! The peace, prosperity and happiness of this great nation, and the sacred principles of human liberty depend upon it. It must be alike defended against the attacks of secession and the spirit of morbid fanaticism. The Union will not be preserved, and its operation will not be perfect until all the States are restored to the blessings and privileges of the Constitution, as equality of rights among the several States is the fundamental principles of our system of government. Our form of Government may well be compared to the Solar system. In that system, the Sun controls the planets, and keeps them in their appropriate orbits. Without this controlling influence, they would wander in wild confusion and darkness amidst the limitless fields of space, and rush on to inevitable ruin. But Omnipotent Wisdom established a perfect system, and by infallible laws the Sun and planets exert upon each other their proper powers and influences, and every thing moves on in order, harmony and beauty. If the Sun were to swallow up the planets, or the planets were to leave their orbits, the whole system would be deranged, and the human mind cannot even conjecture the fatal consequences.

The wisdom of our ancestors established a central government among the States to form a "*more perfect Union.*" They withheld from this central government powers which would enable it to swallow up the States, but they invested it with powers sufficient to control the States within their proper spheres. Any act which tends to destroy the just and harmonious equilibrium of the government, is revolutionary and dangerous. The General Government is possessed of limited and delegated powers, and cannot constitutionally usurp or interfere with the reserved rights of the States. The true States' rights doctrine is, a strict construction of the Constitution, and a rigid enforcement of the delegated powers of the General Government. Consolidation is almost as dangerous to liberty as *disunion*, for it leads to despotism, while the other leads to anarchy. The advocates of either of those doctrines are alike unfaithful to their constitutional obligations. Now that the rebellion is crushed, there is a strong tendency to the centralization of power.

The only safety to our free institutions is a strict observance of the Constitution, and thus preserve the proper relations between the General Government and the several States. When this principle is fully recognized and acted upon, the Union will be complete. When this great work is done, the world will look with wonder and admiration upon the magnificent spectacle, and the lovers of liberty will everywhere rejoice at the triumphant success of the "Great Republic." And cannot the patriotic citizen hope that time will bring forgetfulness of past bitterness; and that mutual forbearance, kindness, and forgiveness, and the sweet influences of our holy Christianity will make us again a happy and united people?

Mr. President, the members of this Convention are actors in this great work of reconciliation, and we will have to answer to our people and posterity for our action. We have a difficult task to accomplish, but I sincerely believe that if we will be actuated by a proper spirit we can overcome every obstacle.

God has not forgotten to be gracious to our people in this time of gloom and disaster. He has placed at the head of our government a man just suited to the occasion. I sincerely believe that Andrew Johnson is an instrument in the hands of God to restore peace and harmony to this divided and distracted country. He is a representative man of true American republicanism. By force of intellect and public virtue he has risen from the humblest walks of private life to the highest position on earth. He now stands forth as the greatest and most patriotic of statesmen, and he is destined to win the proud title of "Restorer of the Republic." He thoroughly understands the nature of our government, for during his whole life it has been the subject of his constant study and the object of his ceaseless love. In his action toward the South he has been just and generous. While we were in rebellion he was our uncompromising foe, but now that the government has triumphed in the conflict, he is our magnanimous friend. After long and anxious deliberation he devised a plan of restoration which he has submitted to the American people, and upon their decision hangs the destiny of free institutions upon this continent.

The first principle which the President asserts is, that the Southern States did not by their attempted secession dissolve their connection with the Union. He also asserts that they are entitled to all the benefits and privileges of the Union as soon as they are restored to the healthful condition of true loyalty.—The only question which ought now to be determined is, have the rebel States shown this true loyalty? The President was generous enough to indicate to the States what he regarded as proper tests of loyalty.

First, the States must declare their ordinance of secession null and void, and thereby deny their right to secede from the Union.—This has been done by the Southern States; but whether it was done under the force of a stern necessity, or in a spirit of true loyalty is still a doubtful and undecided question. We talk right, but our actions will speak louder than words. The American people are determined that this heresy of secession shall be given up forever. It has been a disturbing element almost from the very foundation of the government, and it has produced the bloodiest rebellion in the history of man. The dead Confederacy must be buried beyond the hope of resurrection, and we must cease to mourn over its grave. Without regret I consign it to its merited doom, and turn with cheerful and loyal heart to the government of our fathers.

Mr. President, the political platform upon which the whole Southern people should stand is, *present loyalty—honest and sincere.* This is the only common ground upon which we can all meet and harmonize conflicting opinions, and it is the only position which we can take with truth and a proper self-respect. It is useless to tell the North that a majority of our people were at all times loyal to the Union, for the striking facts of history will contradict such an assertion. Our people were loyal and devoted to the Union until the war began and assumed a sectional character, and then sixty thousand of our best and bravest men voluntarily rushed to arms, and for four years in the midst of privations, difficulties and dangers, fought with a chivalric and stubborn valor which has never been excelled either in ancient or modern times. A large majority of these men, up to the very outburst of the rebellion, would have bravely died beneath the old flag, for the preservation of the Union.—But the terrific storm of sectional strife for a time swept everything before it, and there was scarcely an organized opposition to the madness of rebellion.

Mr. President, I feel that I can with propriety allude to a distinguished man who was a type of conservatism at the commencement of the rebellion. I refer to the Hon. Geo. E. Badger, and I have chosen him as an illustration because he is now gone, and "honor's voice cannot now provoke the silent dust, or sooth the dull cold ear of death." He fought his last battle for the Union in February, 1861, and gained a glorious triumph. During a long life the Union was the shrine of his political devotion, to which he had carried as offerings the warmest affections of his noble heart and the richest gifts of his splendid intellect. When he saw, as he believed, that hallowed shrine in ruins, he turned from it with a sad heart and joined his fortunes with his own people who had so long honored and loved him. He struggled bravely to maintain the principles of civil liberty in the government of his adoption, but his hopes were gone, and soon the "silver cord was loosed and the golden bowl was broken" at the fountain of his life. I wish he was here to-day in his vigor and maturity, for he would be to us a guiding light in our thick darkness. The splendid orb which shone so brightly in the noontide of our country's glory went down amidst clouds and storms, but it has risen in a fairer land, and will shine in an endless day.

Mr. President, there were a great number of our citizens who before the close of the rebellion, earnestly desired peace and restoration to the Union; but our rulers were deaf to all remonstrance, and with a blind infatuation urged on the hopeless and deadly struggle to the humiliation and ruin of subjugation. I can forgive these architects of ruin, but I can never trust them in reconstructing the political fabrics which they have overthrown. Many of those men who were prominent in the rebellion, and preferred subjugation to peace with the Union, are now manifesting a strong desire to maintain their former political power, and unfortunately for the reconciliation of the country, they are too often sustained by the people. These men with apparent willingness gave up their negroes and money, but they regard it as a terrible hardship to yield political power, and this they call "*eating dirt.*"—We must remember that the Northern people have like passions with ourselves, which are excited by similar causes. We have lost our property and many whom we loved in the rebellion, and this remembrance is calculated to fill our hearts with bitterness; and there is also mourning in thousands of Northern homes produced by the same cause, and if we forget not our passions and prejudices can we reasonably expect them to forget and forgive? As long as there is a political sympathy manifested by the South for secession and its leaders, it will increase the tendency to radicalism at the North. These two sectional feelings by operating upon each other produced the rebellion, and they are now in the way of reconciliation; and conservative men should alike oppose both, if they expect a speedy and complete re-union of the nation.

President Johnson has often expressed the opinion that the work of reconciliation can only be effected by the unmistakably loyal men at the South. Who are these unmistakably loyal men? They are those who now have no political sympathy with the principles and leaders of the late rebellion, but who earnestly desire the prosperity of the whole country and the perpetuity of the Union. These men are now denounced as being untrue to their section and unworthy of public confidence, by men who claim to be the peculiar friends of the President, and they appeal to the people to sustain them because they were active in the rebellion *and thus true to their country.* The President has not and never will have any sympathy with such men. He has suffered and sacrificed too much for the Union to be in accord with men who once hated it, and who now fear but do not love it.

I desire no political proscription, but the peace of the country requires that those men who glory in their secession ideas, and claim that they are the true patriots at the South—should stand aside until the work of restoration is completed. Then we can have an open field and a fair fight and let the people decide who were she best friends of the country, those who preferred and obtained subjugation, or those who wished an honorable peace and restoration to the Union.

The President in his plan of restoration laid down another test of loyalty. *The war debt must not be assumed by the rebel States.* It would be difficult for us to satisfy the country that we were loyal, if we had acknowledged as just a debt incurred in an attempt to overturn the government. This was a part of our treason, and it was a strong power in the gigantic rebellion, and it is but right and just that it should perish with the rebellion. In this respect we have fully and promptly done our duty. As to the debt incurred in acts of necessity and charity, and in the proper discharge of the civil functions of the State government, it ought to be left to future legislation, when it can be calmly considered and properly adjusted. Our people ought not now to be burdened with taxation for the payment of any old debts, as it will be difficult for them to meet present obligations. Let us hope that our posterity will be prosperous, and able to meet the honest and loyal obligations which we incurred. In refusing to assume the war debt we gave the highest possible evidence of our loyalty. It involved the destruction of our public credit of which we had long been justly proud. It swept away all of our public charities, our banks and private fortunes, and left thousands of widows and orphans, the helpless objects of charity. If our State is fully restored to the blessings of the Union, these pecuniary losses will soon be forgotten in the peace, security, happiness and prosperity of the future.

The restoration policy of the President required the emancipation of slavery. Slavery was the prime cause of the rebellion. It was the stake we ventured in our appeal to arms. After a long and fearful struggle we have lost the stake, and we should yield it up fully and cheerfully. The Southern people were always unnecessarily sensitive upon this question.—It was safe under the constitution, and could never have been destroyed without a revolution in the government. The Supreme Court had solemnly adjudicated and established the proper status of slavery, and the government had always faithfully endeavored to protect it. Politicians made it a hobby, and by frequent agitation produced a strong feeling of sectional alienation which led to a terrible war. This question should now be settled forever. A large part of the Christian world was opposed to slavery, and it was only maintained at the South by the protection of the constitution.

In yielding up this question we should also properly recognize the consequences which necessarily follow By the action of the government the slave became a freeman, and it was but proper that the government should demand for him the *civil rights* of a freeman.—The great fundamental rights to which every freeman is entitled is "the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property." If the Southern people, after the surrender had by proper legislation promptly guarantied these rights to the freedmen, the government would have been satisfied, and even radicalism would have been quiet. But we permitted our old prejudices to control our action, and thus we kept alive and strengthened the spirit of radicalism at the North. The President gave us his wise and kind counsel, but we heeded him not. He asked us to hold up his hands in his great contest for our rights, but we failed to do so, and now radicalism has triumphed. We refused to grant negro rights, and we may now have to take negro equality.

Why should our legislators be so reluctant to allow the negro to sue and testify in our Courts in cases in which he has an interest? He is entitled to the protection of the law, and this is the only means of obtaining it.—With learned and upright judges and honest juries, I have no fear that the white man will ever suffer wrong from negro testimony. I have long thought that the rules of evidence ought to be so modified as to do away with most of the objections to the competency of a witness and allow him to go before the Courts upon his *credit.* The object of every court in a legal investigation ought to be to find out the truth, and to do justice to the parties litigant, and it matters not whether the truth comes from white or black lips.

As to negro suffrage, that is entirely a different question. The right to regulate suffrage certainly belongs to the States, and any interference upon this subject by Congress is an unwarranted usurpation of power. The right of suffrage is founded upon the idea that the elector understands the true theory of the government and can make a wise selection of his representative. This right is refused to boys until they arrive at the age of legal maturity. It is denied to woman, no matter how intelligent, because their proper sphere is the household and there they are supreme. We love them with all our hearts, but they cannot be trusted with too much power, for fear that there may not be a proper equilibrium in society. This right is also denied to foreigners for a limited time so that they may become acquainted with the customs of our people and understand the workings of our free institutions.

This government was formed by white men, and was originally intended for the benefit of white men; but recent events seem to show that it is tending towards negro *superiority.* The negro is by nature vastly inferior to the white man. He has been in a state of slavery and has had no opportunity of acquiring the intelligence and public virtue necessary to make him a proper elector. Whether he ever will become properly qualified, is a question which the future can alone determine.—For fifty years, the Northern States have had the best and most intelligent portion of the negro race, and still they have not generally been admitted to the rights of suffrage. There the question was a mere matter of *taste,* and had no elements of danger, as the number of negroes was too inconsiderable to exert much political influence. If Northern legislatures have been so reluctant to allow this important political right to the negro, it is unjust and ungenerous for them to force it upon the Southern people. Here the negroes constitute one-third of our population, and they are poor and ignorant, and can be easily influenced by bad men to act unwisely. He will always vote the way that the man who gives him bread may direct.

The Southern people are now very kindly disposed towards their former slaves. The old ties of domestic affection were not completely surrendered by emancipation. The poor negro is now an object of sympathy. In the first wild delirum of freedom, he quit his best friend—*his former master.* With many the phrenzy has passed away, and in want and rags they have returned to their old homes, where they will be treated with kindness and justice. But establish the doctrine of *negro equality,* and as long as Southern blood shall flow in Southern hearts, we will hate and scorn the people who would humiliate and degrade us. This measure will have a direct and powerful tendency to produce a war of the races; and the weaker race will soon have a fate less fortunate than the Indian, whose hunting grounds are now so far removed from the graves of his fathers.

Mr. President: I want peace in this land. I desire all disturbing political questions to be justly settled. I want to have a warm feeling of brotherhood for all the people of this great country. I want to see the Southern people rally with affectionate loyalty beneath the proud folds of the "old flag;" but this can only be brought about by generosity and justice.—We were conqured, and we submit. Our homes were destroyed, and we will rebuild them. Our fortunes were swept away, and we will try by energy and industry, to procure, the necessaries of life—and we will be ever loyal and true to the government; but humiliate and degrade us, by *negro equality,* and we may not have the power to resist oppression, but our hearts will burn with an undying hate that will descend to our latest posterity. The bitter animosity between the stern and stubborn Saxon and the conquering and domineering Norman, lasted for one hundred and fifty years, and Magna Charta was the first treaty of their friendship. This unity of the two races was the birth period of English nationality, liberty and greatness. The spirit of the Saxon still lives at the South, and it will never cease to demand liberty, equality and justice.

The President has completed his plan of restoration and by proclamation he has declared the war at an end, and the Southern States are now entitled to all the benefits and privileges of the Constitution and the Union. Congress refused to acknowledge this executive action, and our fate is not yet determined.—I prefer greatly the plan of the President, but I recognize the authority of Congress as a coordinate branch of the government. I cannot assist Congress in carrying out its radical measures, but when its action becomes a law of the land I will submit to the law as a good citizen. The term *submissionist* is not quite so odious as it was a few years ago. I believe in due submission to law, and it is the highest duty of a patriot and good citizen. If we send a commission to Washington I hope its action may have some tendency to produce a reconciliation between the President and Congress. As at present advised I shall cling to the President, as I believe that he is the true friend of the South and the supporter of the Constitution. I cannot believe that the present Congress correctly represent Northern sentiment. The people of the North are highly educated, refined and christianized. They are in every way a great people and I sincerely believe that when the storms of passion are lulled, they will show themselves to be just and magnanimous. They conquered the Southern people in arms, but they might have won a higher triumph by immediate generosity. If the news of the downfall of the rebellion, as it spread with the speed of lighting through the land, had called forth a general spirit of forgivness and chairty the Southern heart would have responded with the warmest feeling of brotherhood and loyalty. The rebellion, although it was wrong—yes, criminal, yet it was not without some excuse. It involved questions which had been discussed and produced serious divisions ever since the foundation of the government.—The doctrine of ultra States rights has found many advocates among the ablest and purest men of the nation; men who have adorned our history by their genius and left the impress of their wisdom and patriotism upon our free institutions. The rebellion was urged on by a continual strife of sectionalism, and the impartial historian of posterity will not cast the whole blame on the South. The bitter and proscriptive spirit that made constant warfare upon Southern opinion and Southern institutions even while they were under the shelter of the Constitution, win some degree support

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