

A HISTORY-MAKING DAY

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couldn't afford to pass the amendment for the reason that the number of Congressmen being based on the number of votes in the State, the disfranchisement of the negro would take from the State four of its nine Congressmen.

"Then it will rob you of all political capital. You can't talk about bigger rule any more. There is many a braggart Democratic face in this hall today that wouldn't be here but for that. There'll then be nothing in the field but white men and white party."

"White man's party beats white supremacy. White supremacy means white rule, white party is a step higher in the superiority degree. (Laughter.)

"I warn you as a man who knows the future (laughter). I warn you not only for my race's sake but for your own sake: You are fixing a way to get rotted out yourself."

"The King of Persia put to death some of the royal family and put out the eyes of others. Alright. He had the power. But what followed? After awhile the thing re-acted and \$80,000 of his people were put to death."

"This is the most vital thing that has happened since the war. And yet you ain't seen no Republicans caucusing over it? Why? They know why. I know why; and you ought to be wise enough to know why. It will put you in a hole."

The roses are red; violets are blue, but if you love the colored race after you disfranchise them, like the colored race will not love you, no two edged sword in all the land can ever be found to cut this antagonistic love in two."

"Mr. Speaker, if the skin that covers my flesh, that cleaves to my bones is black, in our beloved land, though this be the home of the noble and little virtue and honor count but little. Remember it was the great God who made me black."

"My heart might be snowy white in purity and my soul might reflect the Holy Ghost as given to us in the eternal adoration of the living God; and yet, if I belong to the black race I am in this world friendless and always in a hopeless minority, and appear to be in the way of the great Anglo-Saxon race of these United States."

"I do not hesitate to say: If your mothers and sisters who know all about the trying time of 1861-'62-'63, its woes and its sorrow, could come back from heaven this minute and speak to you, you would be changed at a twinkling of an eye; because you would hear a still heavenly voice from her saying: 'Son stay thy hand.' For Uncle Tom and Aunt Harriet were faithful and true to me and the children when you were far, far away from me and my dying declaration were never to hurt or wound the feelings of Uncle Tom's and Aunt Harriet, nor any one of their race."

The speech of Eaton, another colored member, made a deep impression. It was perhaps the best and strongest presentation of his side of the question that could have been made.

He began by saying that he was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and in that respect the member from Craven had the advantage of him. He wanted to give the members his views, though he feared it would accomplish little.

He contended that the proposed amendment was unconstitutional; that if it abridged the right of the colored man to vote without affecting the white man, the intent of the statute, he argued, was certainly to disfranchise the negro, and that in construing the law the courts would apply this test.

"This is a primary rule for the construction of statutes—to consider the spirit and object of the passage of this law. Isn't the avowed purpose of this law to put an end to negroes voting? Don't your newspapers acknowledge this? Didn't you come here to secure white supremacy?"

"Then there is the educational qualification. The law says no man shall take advantage of his own wrong. Why is the negro ignorant? Is it not your fault? Wasn't there a law on the books in 1831 making it a crime for a negro to learn to read and write?

"The young negro who is so offensive is not disfranchised, because he can read and write. But the old colored servant is the man this law hits—the old man that loves the white race better than his own race. He it is who feels himself honored for you to come into his humble hut. He will set before you the best he has, and gladly eat the scraps you leave. Consider how he has toiled for you, and for your father—cared for those at home while you were in battle or thrown up breastworks for you to fight behind to keep him in slavery."

He argued that the negro was steadily becoming more intelligent, and if the negro were given another trial as a citizen he did not think the future would be so disappointing as the past had been.

"The negro has not been responsible for the past ten years of misrule in North Carolina. It is unjust, therefore, to make him the scapegoat to bear into the wilderness—the sins of the Fusion combination. This law puts him with the idiot, the insane, the criminal and the infidel—none man wants to be in—and all for no fault of his."

"It is contrary to Anglo-Saxon custom and tradition. The Anglo-Saxon race is noted for being the uplifter of the oppressed and down-trodden. When it has violated this tradition it has had to pay for it in blood."

This talk of inheriting the power of self-government is nothing but a revival of the doctrine of the divine right of Kings. It was this doctrine that cast James II and Charles I their heads and sent others into exile. As it has brought woe in the past, so will it in the future. The doctrine of this country is that all men are created free and equal. This doctrine must and will prevail."

Still another colored member—Wright, of Warren—entered his protest against the amendment, which he called "a great social hummer of political death."

He argued that if the negro was cut off from the right to vote because of illiteracy, the white man ought to be cut off also, and that both should be put on an equal footing."

Mr. Hammon, (D. C.), of Surry, contended that the policy of all the States, except perhaps Rhode Island and Massachusetts, was universal suffrage.

"No educational qualification has been required because the States have not been able to furnish the money where every child in each State could be given a good English education and then be compelled to attend school from the age of eight to sixteen. Until the

people are able to stand taxation that would meet this requirement it is unjust to impose any educational qualification."

"The poll tax requirement is an incentive to deprive the State of not less than \$100,000 per year from this source, instead of only robbing those who are liable to pay this tax, it is a suggestion that they do not pay by removing the lien on all property except such as is assessed for taxation. This means, of course, that no poll tax will be collected by the sale of personal property and 50,000 men in this State who are liable for poll tax own no real estate and they will pay no poll tax."

"It is a most serious matter in government to deprive any person of the right to vote. This amendment if ratified by the people, which I don't think is possible, will deprive 50,000 men, who have enjoyed the right of suffrage for thirty years, of the right to vote."

"If the men thus to be deprived of their rights were white men this attempt to disfranchise them would be met by an appeal to arms. It would be much better to enact laws under the decision of Harris against Wright, so as to provide government for the subdivisions of the State government and thus meet and prevent the evils which impel this proposed amendment."

Mr. Williams, (Rep.), of Yadkin, realized that nothing he could do or say would have any effect on the result, but he felt that he would be untrue to the trust reposed in him by his people if he didn't oppose this amendment. There were in his county many white men whom it would disfranchise, and to that he would never consent.

"I cannot sit here quietly and see this done. My people are people through whose veins course the blood of freemen, and with Patrick Henry they exclaim, Give me liberty or give me death."

The Speaker now recognized Mr. Winston, of Bertie, the introducer of the resolution upon which the amendment before the House was based.

"If there is one sentiment now beating in the hearts of the people of North Carolina," he began, "it is that they have liberty or death. They prefer liberty. (Applause.)

"I will not discuss the constitutional side of this question. That has already been done by one of North Carolina's ablest and most distinguished constitutional lawyers.

"Neither shall I pay any attention to men who come here to-day to praise of White Supremacy, and whose every vote has been against the best interests of the people of North Carolina. (Applause.) Every man who now talks of White Supremacy must show his faith by his works. (Applause.) Have we soon forgotten Newbern and Greenville and Tarboro and Wilmington? (Applause.)

"I understand there are gentlemen on this floor who have conscientious scruples on this question. To them I say the individual conscience must be sunk in the public good. (Applause.)

"You have paused for consideration. I trust it is the pause before the revolution.

"How now would read the name of the man who refused to sign the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence? Would his name not be coupled with that of Benedict Arnold? Are not men today glad to be descendants of the Ayers, Brevards, and others who put their names to that immortal document?

"From this hour another ancestral date will be reckoned. (Applause.) Men of future generations will be glad to be descendants of those who have dared stand and write their names in the State's history for its material welfare and the liberty of its people. (Applause.)

"In the French convention old Barbeaux arose and said, 'Send to Marceilles for six hundred men who know how to die. They sent and the six hundred came marching to the notes of the Marseilles hymn, and as they came half a million men thundering at the gates of Paris. And the revolution had begun.'

McNeill (Dem.): Had promised on campaign not to vote for it.

Redding (Dem.): Had promised not to vote for it.

Reinhart (Dem.): Had promised not to vote for it.

Stevens (Dem.): Did not consider it a violation of any promise.

Stubbs (Dem.): "Not only white manhood, but the white childhood and womanhood of the State demand it. The promise made to the ears must not be broken to the hope."

Tarkenton (Pop.): Since it was to be submitted to the people he would vote aye.

White, (Rep., of Davie): It will disfranchise many white people."

Williams, (Dem.) of Iredell: Willing to trust the people.

Johnson, (Pop.), of Sampson: Vote for it because people have a vote on it.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

Section 1. That Article VI of the Constitution of North Carolina be, and the same is hereby abrogated, and in lieu thereof shall be substituted the following Article of said Constitution:

Burrow (Rep.): In the name of his people he protested against thus robbing citizens of their liberty.

Carter (Rep.): Wouldn't vote for it because the Democrats had promised to disband franchise body.

Council: "In casting my vote for this amendment I am influenced by the highest consideration for the future welfare of every citizen in North Carolina. I am a firm believer in the truth that good government can only be attained through the exercise of intelligent suffrage and the adoption of this amendment looks to this end alone."

If, Mr. Speaker, any question of the wisdom of submitting this amendment to the people, I am a firm believer in the truth that good government can only be attained through the exercise of intelligent suffrage and the adoption of this amendment looks to this end alone."

In submitting this amendment we do not disband franchise any citizen or this State; we simply allow the people to say whether or not any standard of suffrage shall be fixed, by which future government in North Carolina is to be influenced. It will doubtless be urged by some that the adoption of this amendment means the disfranchisement of white citizens of this State. Such a proposition, Mr. Speaker, is unfounded, and I assert that it will only be made by those who are the natural enemies to good government. If, Mr. Speaker, I felt that in voting to submit this amendment to the people that I was voting to disband franchise any white citizens of this State, however lowly in rank, I would unhesitatingly cast my vote against the amendment; but feeling that I do not, and feeling that the brave, true and intelligent constituency I represent will sustain me in doing what I believe and what I think they

will be entitled to register and vote at any election in this State by reason of his failure to possess the educational qualification prescribed in section four of this Article: Provided, he shall have registered in accordance with the terms of this section prior to December 1, 1898. The General Assembly shall provide for a permanent record of all persons who register under this section, on or before November first, one thousand nine hundred and eight; and all such persons shall be entitled to register and vote in all elections by the people in this State, unless disqualified under section two of this Article: Provided, such persons shall have paid their poll tax as required by law."

Section 6. All elections by the people shall be by ballot, and all elections by the General Assembly shall be by voice.

Section 7. 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 or affirm 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 8. The following classes of persons shall be disqualified for office: First, all persons who shall 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, of 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, or corruption and malpractice in office unless such person shall be restored to the rights of citizenship in manner prescribed by law.

Section 9. That all of the provisions of the Constitution relating to suffrage, registration and elections, as contained in this act, amending the Constitution, shall go into effect on the first day of July, 1898, if a majority of the qualified voters of the State so declare at the next general election.

Section 10. This amendment shall be submitted at the next general election to the qualified voters of the State, in the same manner and under the same rules and regulations as is provided in the law regulating general elections as is provided in the law regulating general elections in this State, and in force May 1st, 1898; and at said election those persons desiring to vote for such amendment shall cast a written or printed ballot with the words "For Suffrage Amendment" thereon; and those with a contrary opinion shall cast a written or printed ballot with the words "Against Suffrage Amendment" thereon.

Section 11. The said election shall be held and the votes returned, compared, counted and canvassed, and the result announced, under the same rules and regulations as are in force for returning, comparing, counting and canvassing the votes for members of the General Assembly, May 1st, 1898, and if a majority of the votes cast are in favor of the said amendment, it shall be the duty of the Governor of the State to certify said amendment under the seal of the State to the Secretary of State, who shall enroll the said amendment so certified among the permanent records of his office.

Section 12. This act shall be in force from and after its ratification.

THE DAY'S BUSINESS.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

Petition from citizens of Burke county asking for additional courts. By Hoffman, of Burke. Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns.

Petition of citizens of Shallotte against incorporation of that town. By McNeil, of Brunswick. Committee on Dispensaries.

H. B. 811: Act to authorize the treasurer of Cherokee county to pay a school claim of \$11,90.

H. B. 1,307. S. B. 443: Act to prohibit live stock from running at large in Cross Creek township, Cumberland county.

H. B. 1,182: Act to incorporate the Bank of Cumberland at Fayetteville.

H. B. 1,313: Act to provide officers for the town of East Bend, Yadkin county.

H. B. 333: Act to amend the charter of the city of Raleigh.

H. B. 1,296: Act to incorporate the town of Gold Point, in Martin county.

H. B. 1,281: Act to amend chapter 144, Public Laws of 1895, in reference to the levy of a special tax by Graham county.

H. B. 1,254: Act to incorporate the Commercial and Savings Bank of Goldsboro.

H. B. 1,419: Act to repeal chapter 237, Private Laws of 1895, and to incorporate the Emancipation Proclamation Society.

H. B. 1,525: Act to authorize J. L. Welch to pay surplus road tax for Valley Town township to the treasurer of Cherokee county.

H. B. 1,329: Act to incorporate the Black Diamond Company.

H. B. 1,330: Act to incorporate the Ohio River, Franklin and Tide Water Railroad Company.

H. B. 1,523. S. B. 880: Act to amend section 616, of the Code, relating to actions of quo warranto.

H. B. 704, S. B. 208: Act to authorize Moore county to fund the county indebtedness.

H. B. 774, S. B. 204: Act in regard to issuing license to retail liquor in Wilkesboro, submitting the question to a vote of the citizens.

H. B. 1,258: Act to prevent the ranging of live stock in Graham county by non-residents. People living outside of the State may range 10 head of cattle for each 100 acres of land owned. This bill is to prevent people in Tennessee from driving cattle across the line.

H. B. 1,125: Act to incorporate the Raleigh Banking and Trust Company.

H. B. 1,328: Act to prohibit the manufacture of spirituous liquors and regulate the sale thereof in Bryson City.

H. B. 1,061: Act for better drainage of the lowlands of Lincoln county.

H. B. 1,528: Act to establish a public ferry across the Yadkin river in Yadkin and Forsyth counties.

H. B. 1,275: Act to regulate the fees of the cotton weighers of Statesville.

H. B. 1,212: Act to amend the charter of Red Springs Seminary.

H. B. 1,266: Act to amend chapter 320, Private Laws of 1893, to amend the charter of the town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg county.

H. B. 1,496: Act to establish a public library in Mosecasin River.

H. B. 1,497: Act to prohibit obstructions in Mosecasin River; to prevent passage of fish. By Carraway, of Lenoir. Committee on Proprieties and Grievances.

H. B. 1,498: Act to give liberty stable keepers a lien on horses. By Rountree, of New Hanover. Committee on Justice.

H. B. 1,499: Act to amend section 1, of the Code, relating to working on Sunday, making it a misdemeanor punishable by \$50 fine. By Bunch of Guilford. Committee on Judiciary.

H. B. 1,490: Act to appoint justices of the peace for Lincoln county.

H. B. 1,491: Act to incorporate Spruce Pine Presbyterian church in Mitchell county. By Pritchett, of Mitchell. Committee on Proprieties and Grievances.

H. B. 1,49