

North



State.

By HANES & BRUNER,

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SALISBURY, N. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1868.

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From the Raleigh Sentinel.

CONSERVATIVE STATE
CONVENTION.

Grand Rally of the Representatives of the People!

The White Men of North Carolina
in Council:

Yesterday being the day appointed by the State Conservative Executive Committee, for the assembling of the Conservatives of North Carolina, in Convention, the spacious and elegant Tucker Hall, on its lower floor, was filled before the hour of meeting. A number of persons, including ladies, were in the galleries, deeply interested spectators of the scene.

The Convention was called to order at 11 o'clock, A. M., by Col. Thos. A. Allison, of the county of Iredell, who moved that, for the purpose of temporary organization, R. H. Smith, Esq., of Halifax, be invited to take the Chair.

The motion having been unanimously adopted,

Mr. Smith took the Chair, amid the applause of the convention.

The chairman, in returning his acknowledgements, remarked that only a few moments before he had been apprised of the intended honor. He hardly knew, therefore, in what terms to address the convention. It had met under extraordinary circumstances. If ever there was a time when the people should speak out and assert their rights, (if they had any left,) this was, emphatically, the time. Threatened with the overthrow of our institutions, and what little remnant of liberty we have left, it was both the privilege and the duty of the people to confer together for the good of the country. Being but the temporary chairman, he would say no more than to counsel the convention to act promptly and vigorously—to do nothing in passion or heat,—but circumspectly and prudently to adopt such measures as were best calculated to advance the patriotic objects of the assembly.

On motion of the Hon. Thomas Bragg, of Wake, Messrs. Seaton Gales, J. A. Engelhard, Lewis Hanes and Jordan Stone were requested to act as temporary Secretaries of the convention.

The list of the counties was then called, when the following delegates came forward and had their names recorded, viz: Alamance—R. Y. McAden, T. M. Holt, E. M. Cooke, Albert Murray, T. G. McLean, J. F. Hunter, Geo. Bason, James E. Boyd, J. W. Stockard, A. C. McAllister.

Brunswick—Col. John D. Taylor, David S. Cowan.

Buncombe—Marcus Erwin.
Burke—S. McD. Tate, T. D. Carter, W. F. McKesson, A. C. Avery.

Cabarrus—G. L. Gibson, R. S. Harris, John Wincoff, R. W. Means, W. C. Means.

Catawba—Dr. J. R. Ellis.
Carteret—L. W. Martin, B. H. Bell, W. Ward, T. A. Robbins, George W. Charlotte.

Caswell—Livingston Brown, A. S. Williamson, Thos. W. Farish, C. B. Luck, Dr. J. L. Williamson.

Clay and Cherokee—John W. Graham, Proxy.

Cleveland—Plato Durham, (applause)
Columbus—J. M. McGougan.

Craven—Jude M. E. Manly, Henry R. Bryan, John D. Planner, C. R. McLean, Samuel Radcliff, Israel Disosway, John O'Conner, John Spelman, T. D. Foy, C. D. Upchurch, James E. Morris, Alex. O. Latham, Julius S. Ash, David W. Bell, William H. Oliver, M. V. Stanton, J. H. Brison, G. E. Allen, Dr. P. E. Hines, Thomas J. Mitchell, Maj. John Hughes, C. Manly, J. P. Clark, Daniel Lane, Joseph J. Robinson.

Caldwell—Col. G. N. Folk, Maj. W. H. Malone, Capt. W. D. Jones.

Chatham—K. T. Perry, M. Perry, Alvin Bynum, Stanly Rigby, T. S. Love, A. B. Bright, M. Q. Waddell, Saml. Perry, Geo. Poe, H. A. London, W. L. Garrett, J. L. Houghton, Robt. Love, Thos. Love, J. W. Page, Oliver McMath, Jesse Richardson, Cicero Hadley, Ed. Perry, A. Self.

Davidson—Lewis Hanes, B. B. Roberts, M. H. Pinnix, Dr. W. B. Meares.

Duplin—John C. McMillan.

Franklin—W. H. Mitchell, P. C. Person, Thos. Winston, A. Henley, E. Gupton, L. Joyner, Danl. S. Hill, W. K. Davis.
Granville—J. J. Speed, Robt. N. Furman, H. Davis.

Guilford—Jesse H. Lindsay, Peter Adams, Sr., Wm. A. Coble, John McCulloch, Peter Adams, Jr., H. K. Witherspoon, J. R. McLean, Jas. T. Morehead, Jr.

Henderson—Hon. A. S. Merrimon, Prox. Harnett—Jesse Morgan.

Halifax—R. H. Smith, R. O. Burton, J. Stone.

Hertford—J. B. Hare.
Jones—T. D. Foy, Proxy.

Iredell—John H. McLaughlin, T. A. Allison, Benj. Arey, J. H. Hill, S. A. Sharpe, W. W. Foot, G. W. Clegg, W. P. Drake, H. M. Allison, R. F. Simonton.

Johnston—James H. Abell, Dr. John H. Beckwith, Charles E. Preston, Maj. H. J. Ryals, S. R. Horn, Dr. R. Rooker, John W. Sharp, Haywood Howell, Jethro Thane, Wm. H. Averca.

Lenoir—Jesse C. Kennedy, F. A. Brothers, A. Munro, George B. Whitfield, Lewis C. Desmond.

Lincoln—Jno. Bollinger, Dr. M. Brown, J. F. Hoke.

McDowell—W. W. Flemming.
Macon—A. T. Davidson.

Mecklenburg—Gov. Vance, J. L. Morehead, J. H. McAden, T. J. Grier.

Moore—N. McK. McNeill.
New Hanover—A. J. DeRossett, J. A. Engelhard, C. W. McClammy, E. D. Hall, D. G. Worth.

Northampton—R. B. Peebles, W. R. Pepper.

Orange—Wm. A. Graham, J. C. Parish, Philip Sutherland, Joseph Woods, Wm. Strayhorn, M. W. Moore, Paul. C. Cameron, W. W. Guess, R. F. Webb, Jas. Webb, John A. Turrentine, John W. Graham, E. M. Holt, John Berry.

Onslow—John W. Shackelford, Franklin Thompson.

Pitt—R. W. Joyner.
Richmond—John W. Leak, Walter L. Steele.

Rowan—F. E. Shober, Wm. E. Robbins, Kerr Craige, J. S. Henderson, F. N. Luckey, J. C. Turner, J. F. Stancill, J. S. McCubbins.

Sampson—Alexander Williams, Jno. C. Williams, George R. Williams.

Surry—Seaton Gales, R. C. Badger, Proxies.

Wake—Col. J. P. H. Russ, Thos. Bragg, A. S. Merrimon, H. P. Tucker, W. D. Williams, J. Q. A. DeCarter, Rev. Wm. E. Pell, Robt. W. Haywood, Alfred Upchurch, D. L. Royster, J. Horton, Geo. Little, Richard B. Haywood, George Whiting, L. E. Heartt, Wm. H. Crow, H. W. Hustad, Alex. Lawrence, J. J. Overby, W. D. Johnson, P. P. Williams, E. E. Harris, J. J. Ferrell, W. R. Cox, C. B. Root, Talbot Selby, W. R. Andrews, S. V. House, Thos. D. Hogg, Thos. Jenkins, M. C. Harrison, D. G. Fowle, Theo. H. Hill, Wm. C. Upchurch, James A. Moore, N. V. Denton.

Wilkes—Dr. J. S. Calloway, E. M. Welborn, Esq., Col. H. A. Brown and R. F. Armfield.

Wayne—George V. Strong, William G. Morrisey, Council S. Wooten, Alvah B. Palmer, E. Arnold Wright and John M. Clemmons.

Warren—Weldon N. Edwards, Wharton J. Green. [Applause.]

Watauga—Z. B. Vance, A. S. Merrimon, Proxies.

Transylvania—Hon. A. S. Merrimon, Proxy.

On motion of Col. Walter L. Steele, of Richmond, it was ordered that the temporary Chairman appoint a committee of two delegates from each Congressional District to recommend permanent officers of the convention. Whereupon, the Chairman appointed the following gentlemen, viz:

First District—Rev. R. O. Burton, R. B. Peebles.

Second District—Jno. Hughes, Dr. A. J. DeRossett.

Third District—W. L. Steele, John D. Taylor.

Fourth District—P. C. Cameron, D. G. Fowle.

Fifth District—J. R. McLean, B. B. Roberts.

Sixth District—F. E. Shober, R. F. Simonton.

Seventh District—A. C. Avery, Marcus Erwin.

Pending the retirement of the Committee, loud calls from all parts of the Hall brought the Hon. Zebulon B. Vance to his feet. He commenced by remarking, in his own peculiar style, that he once heard of an Irishman, who was looking at one of those donkey engines that are used in unloading ships. Gazing indignantly at it a while, he exclaimed: "Arrah, ye may puff and smoke and rattle away, tell ye's clane out of breath, and do the work of twenty men at that, but, blast ye, ye can't vote!" So, Mr. Chairman, I may puff and smoke, but I can't vote, for all that. Still sir, though I may be deprived of all political power in the land of my affections and nativity, yet I can still claim to be a white man; and, what is more, I have no prejudices against my own color.

I may add that I have none against the black race. They have behaved well in the past, as a general rule, and whenever they have gone astray, it has been almost invariably at the instigation of some white rascal. He repeated that he had no prejudice against his own color,—against the statesmen and patriots, and sages, who had illustrated our annals in the past; he had not yet yielded, thank God! to the temptations of the times so far, as to attempt or desire to disguise himself by donning a black livery. As an old Friend once said, he was "still alive and on praying ground." He thanked Heaven that he was surrounded by so many intelligent and patriotic representative gentlemen of the State, so many of his former associates—the true men who, "though they had sworn to their own hurt, had changed not"—who did not seek to commend their own loyalty by foreswearing themselves, and proving recreant to every former profession. It was, indeed, a privilege, for which he was gratified, to be envied by such men.

He predicted that the dawning of a better day was at hand. Everything indicated its approach. The light comes from the sun, and we can tell when daylight approaches, if we will watch the stars, and the lesser orbs of night. When the God of Day sends out his herald beams the smaller luminaries, with commendable modesty, get out of the way. That time is coming. "I know it," said he,—"I feel it in my bones!" From every quarter, the signs of reaction are auspicious.

In North Carolina, we have a white majority of 35,000—yet they were so prostrate and depressed by misfortune as to allow the late election to go by default.—Now, if we will remember what we have been in the past, who we are now, and to whom we are kin,—will arouse ourselves and put on the bearing of men,—will make a vigorous and active canvass, we shall atone for the past and save North Carolina. No argument is necessary. A man who needs an argument to convince him, in this exigency, of his duty, is a fool, upon whom argument would be waste of breath. It is only necessary to urge our people to do their duty, and we will secure the government to the hands of the intelligent, tax-paying, white men of North Carolina. This will be best for all races and colors.

[At every stage of his remarks, the eloquent speaker was greeted with enthusiastic acclamations.]

The Hon. Wm. A. Graham was next vociferously called for. This distinguished gentleman made a few excellent remarks, but, as he subsequently spoke at greater length, we forbear a report of them here.

The Hon. R. Y. McAden next made a few appropriate remarks, in response to loud calls. He expressed his profound gratification at the distinguished and patriotic character of the Convention, and augured their best results from its assemblage. He believed and hoped that a brighter day was dawning for North Carolina, the South and the Union.

The enthusiastic invitations of the convention next brought the Hon. Weldon N. Edwards to his feet. He said that the Convention sought to impose upon him a task to which he was inadequate.—Extreme age rendered him unfit to afford entertainment to such a body. "Old as I am," said the venerable patriot, "I have come here simply to signify my approval of this meeting, to endorse its action, and to commit my fortunes, good or bad, to the same barque in which are to be committed those of the Anglo Saxon race!—This sentiment was received with long continued applause.

The Hon. Thomas Bragg next came forward, in obedience to prolonged calls. He commenced by remarking that the Convention had assembled under peculiar circumstances. The faces around him were familiar. He saw many with whom he had associated in the past, and he hoped that their deliberations would redound to the honor and welfare of the State. For one, he was not altogether disappointed at the state of things under which we are laboring, for he had expected,—however improbable, a few short years ago, it might have been deemed.—We are now under a grinding despotism, (there is no use in mincing phrases),—without law or liberty, and the Constitution of our fathers regarded as no more than a bit of waste paper. Still, we had an abiding faith that all would yet be well. The people of the country will do their duty, and after a while our spoliated privileges, would be in some measure, restored. The justice and good sense of the masses will return to them and prevail.—Coming events cast their shadows before. Much of the injustice that has been done us,—most of the iniquitous legislation that has been consummated, will be wiped out. We must aid in this great movement. We must go to work actively and enlighten the people. We must arouse them to a sense of their duty. We must resist our enemies in every lawful manner,—face to face, and breast to breast,—and

then, if we go down, we shall, at least, feel like men! [Great applause.]

Here the Committee returned, and the Hon. D. G. Fowle, Chairman of the Committee, reported the following list of permanent officers of the Convention, viz:

FOR PRESIDENT,
HON. WILLIAM A. GRAHAM.

VICE PRESIDENTS.
Hon. Weldon N. Edwards, Warren.
Hon. Lewis Hanes, Davidson,
Richard H. Smith, Halifax.
Samuel Radcliffe, Craven.
John W. Leak, Richmond.
J. P. H. Russ, Wake.
Jesse H. Lindsay, Guilford.
John H. McLaughlin, Iredell.
A. T. Davidson, Macon.
Col. E. D. Hall, New Hanover.
Saml. McD. Tate, Burke.
William M. Robbins, Rowan.
R. F. Armfield, Wilkes.

SECRETARIES.
Seaton Gales, of the Raleigh Sentinel.
J. A. Engelhard, of the Wil. Journal.
Jordan Stone, of the Roanoke News.
W. P. Drake, Statesville American.
J. H. Biinn, of the Newbern Herald.

The nominations were unanimously ratified,—the name of each gentleman, as announced, having been received with loud plaudits.

The temporary Chairman having requested the Hon. Thomas Bragg and Col. Thos. A. Allison to conduct Gov. Graham to the stand, that gentleman came forward and assumed the Chair, amid the hearty cheers of the large and enthusiastic audience.

Gov. Graham said that although he had expected to take his full share in the deliberations of the Convention, nothing could surprise him more than this call to preside over it. He had no intimation that such would be the case, and would, therefore, apologize, in advance, for any deficiencies in what he might have to say. He thanked the Convention heartily for the appreciation of himself implied in the honor conferred, and would endeavor to discharge the duties imposed upon him to the best of his ability.

We had met for purposes of deliberation on the political situation. A desolating and expensive war had swept over the land, and the question now to be settled is whether, after all, we have PEACE. The President of the United States declares that we have,—the Judicial Department of the land has so decided, (especially has Judge Nelson emphatically so declared in the Eagan Habeas Corpus case.) But Congress implies, by its action, that we still prevail. Surely, if so, war only exists by a fiction of law, of which the people are profoundly ignorant. They had supposed that the armies of the South surrendered, that the capitulation had been accepted in good faith, and that, therefore, Peace prevailed. In other countries, after a protracted and desolating war, and the return of peace, men may have been punished, but it was done in a constitutional manner. But the measures taken indicate that the States, as States, must suffer, as well as men in their individual capacities.

Gov. G. said that he thought (with all deference to Congress, of which he should speak in no terms of contumely) that it would have been no difficult matter to have settled the controversy, given harmony to the country, and placed the people on the road of a moderate prosperity, instead of their being, as now, depressed and impoverished. When Charles the Second came back to the throne—an era of restoration of authority, somewhat analogous to the present, after that authority had been temporarily deposited,—Lord Clarendon, the Chancellor, speaking for the King, said to Parliament: "His Majesty directs me to say that he is a suitor to you, and asks you to join with him in restoring the country and people to their ancient temper and dignity, their old good humor and manners." Oh! for a Clarendon at the close of our war. If it had been proclaimed in the councils of the country that there was a desire to restore harmony and the return of concord and amity, it would have been universally seconded, and although some little ground-swell of alienation might have succeeded to the furious lashings of the storm, all would, ere now, have been tranquil and peaceful.

The war had been carried on about a question upon which the people had differed from the formation of the Constitution. A large class believed that a State had a right to withdraw from the Union, as in case of ordinary contracts, when they thought the obligation violated on the other side. That class constituted, perhaps, the majority,—a majority which held the reins of power with rare intervals. He (Mr. G.) had never believed in that doctrine; but it was a disputed question. When, therefore, it was practically resorted to, it was only bringing to trial the issue which, sooner or later, would have come. True, he did not think our grievances sufficient to warrant a resort to it, but when North Carolina thought her duty and honor required her to take part in the great issue, he went with her into what he regarded as a revolution. We did our utmost for our section and our cause; and when we failed, we did our utmost for peace, on such terms as were just and honorable.—We meant PEACE in reality.

It has been supposed by some that the war might have been terminated earlier. The distinguished speaker said that he had been placed in a position where he could minutely discern the current events. "As the hart panted for the water-brooks," he had yearned for peace, but he had not seen the time when he believed that it could be had at a much earlier moment than when it came. A long protracted war is, generally, a security for a lasting peace. All

opposition ceased, on the termination of hostilities; the people saw the contest (waged on unequal terms) decided against them; they acquiesced, and only longed to be restored to the rights of American citizens, according to the Constitution.

Gov. Graham next briefly discussed the policy of President Johnson, with reference to the State governments, after the surrender. While he did not conceive it necessary to strike down those governments, yet, in common with all our people, he acquiesced therein. He recounted the concessions and sacrifices made by the people of the South, in obedience to the exactions made upon them. They did all this for the sake of Peace. And yet Congress is not satisfied. Another Convention has been called by it,—not by the State,—bringing in the colored race as voters—a thing unknown before—and through that agency it is sought to change entirely our State government and place us under a new and anomalous one. He expressed his belief that the people of the North will not sanction this. They will find a departure from the golden rule mischievous and dangerous; and as they claim the regulation of their own internal affairs, so, when they come to act with deliberation and dispassion, they will do justice by restoring to the people of North Carolina the same great right. Justice is so natural—a sense of right so invariably prevails,—that, when the matter is presented fairly, they will say "this is right." And this conclusion will be hastened, when, forgetting latter prejudices, they go back to the past and remember that it was the Southern Washington who compelled Gage to raise the siege of Boston, and that it was the troops of North Carolina and Virginia who, on the Hudson, amid the hills of Jersey, in Pennsylvania, and down to the Brandywine, broke the back of British power.

Gov. G. cited the case of the Dorr rebellion, and the judicial decision therein to prove that the forms of government can never be rightfully changed, except by those who at the time exercise the right of suffrage, and, accordingly declared that the present attempt of Congress to change those of the Southern States was revolutionary. But in the case of this attempted change—on this Constitution which is to be presented to the people—we have a right to vote, and it will be our fault if it is fastened upon us. We have a majority of over 30,000 registered white voters, and the question is whether they will take the blacks into political partnership. "I," said Gov. G., "with the kindest feelings to that race, say No." Political association cannot come until social association shall precede it. We are not without observation. Where has the experiment ever succeeded? [The Speaker here entered into a forcible recital of the effects of negro suffrage and rule in Hayti and Jamaica.] With these examples before us, shall we establish? A good deal had been said about "impartial suffrage," with certain qualifications of property or intelligence as the test. He was opposed to disfranchising any white man in North Carolina. And as to the blacks, while some of them, under the test, might be qualified, yet the line of color was the true line of demarcation; and that would be best for all races. Stability in government is indispensable.

Gov. G. expressed the hope that the present state of things would cease. If the men in power have no commiseration, the great masses can feel the movements of sympathy. There are evidences of this everywhere. He was sure that there was no desire here to perpetuate hatreds. Unfortunately as the war was, it had had, and would still have, the effect of making the world think more highly of this country.—Although, for the present, prejudices might exist, and clouds might impend over the names of some, history will accord to the people of North and South alike the highest meed of admiration for a heroism, prowess and manhood, such as the world never saw before. Their mutual achievements are so many common exhibitions of the greatness of the American people.

The speaker next pronounced a high eulogy upon the Judiciary of the land, and expressed high hopes from that quarter, and indulged in an eloquent tribute to President Johnson. After again returning his acknowledgments, he took his seat amid great applause.

[The foregoing is a most insufficient and meagre abstract of this great speech, which was received with great delight by the Convention, and which, we hope, will yet be written out for publication.]

The other officers elected then assumed their respective positions.

On motion the Rules of Order of the House of Commons, as far as applicable were adapted for the Government of this convention.

Col. E. D. Hall, of New Hanover, offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted, viz:

Resolved, That, in the efforts we are about to make, to save the country from humiliation and ruin, we will put aside all former party predilections, and know only a common purpose to preserve civil liberty and restore a Constitutional Union.

On motion of Col. W. L. Steele, the President was directed to appoint a Committee of Sixteen,—two from each Judicial District—to prepare Resolutions and other business for the Convention; whereupon:

The President named the following gentlemen:

1st. District—J. B. Hare, and Richard H. Smith.

2nd.—M. E. Manly, W. G. Morrissey.

3rd.—Thomas Bragg, D. S. Hill.
4th.—M. Q. Waddell, P. C. Cameron.
5th.—W. L. Steele, J. D. Taylor.
6th.—Z. B. Vance, Lewis Hanes.
7th.—A. C. Avery, R. F. Armfield.
8th.—A. S. Merrimon, A. T. Davidson.

On motion of Col. J. F. Hoke, of Lincoln, a Committee of Five was ordered, to report on Plan of Organization, &c.

The Chair appointed the following gentlemen to constitute the Committee, viz: Jno. F. Hoke, D. G. Fowle, Col. W. J. Green, Col. G. N. Folk, Jno. Hughes.

On motion, the Convention then adjourned until to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock.