

The Weekly Carolina Era.

Office, in the "Standard" building, East side of Fayetteville Street.

LEWIS HANES, - - Editor.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1871.

Col. Marcus Erwin.

After our last paper had been made up, and we had left the office, the withdrawal of this gentleman, as one of the editors of THE ERA, was sent in. Hence our silence at the time.

Our personal and professional relations with Col. Erwin have been of the most pleasant and agreeable character, and we regret that they have been terminated so soon. Contrary to the predictions of some, Col. Erwin and ourself have agreed most cordially, not only as to the manner in which the paper should be conducted, but upon all the important questions that have been discussed in its columns during our joint editorship. Col. Erwin retires for the purpose of devoting all his time to other employments, carrying with him the good wishes of all parties concerned in the management of THE ERA, as well as of his former associate editor. We wish him that success to which his talents and magnanimous character so eminently entitle him, in whatever he may undertake.

The Charlotte Bulletin and the Public Printing.

This old Democratic Journal thus speaks of the printing scindle:

"ROBBING THE STATE.—The disclosures just published by the special Committee on Printing, in the North Carolina Legislature, shows a most villainous piece of rascality on the part of those who represent *The Raleigh Sentinel*, far exceeding the operations of Littlefield & Co.

This is a double robbery, for settlements with their compositors are counted by one scale and their charges against the State are made out by another scale no where recognized by printers, unless the M is turned sideways, thus: (E), forming a perfect square. The contractor should be made to count in the manner indicated.

We notice that Messrs. Nichols & Gorman, and Maj. Herne, Editor of *The Carolinian*, have handled the party without gloves, and as the Editor of *The Sentinel* subscribes to the code, having challenged Governor Caldwell, he cannot avoid the presentation of his Card to Major Hearne. His pluck as well as his character is on the wind.

This robbery has not been committed by Democrats, it is the work of Conservatives, Whigs, and our immediate Representative, Mr. Waring, a Democrat, did all he could to protect the Treasury.

The majority report is a miserable attempt to white-wash the rascality. The report of the minority is an intelligent, manly exposure of facts, and the attempt by our managers to cover the fraud should be sternly rebuked by the people."

Is the Bulletin certain that J. H. Moore is an old Whig?

Frauds.

We publish elsewhere a sensible article from *The Salisbury Watchman* on the subject of the Public Printing. *The Watchman* is as strong and decided Conservative paper, and its Editor is one of the oldest and best practical printers in the State. The view which he takes of the contract between the Legislative Committee and the Public Printer is the only one that can or will be taken by any intelligent and experienced member of the craft.

The Watchman expresses the hope that THE ERA will show equal zeal in exposing and bringing to justice those who have defrauded the State heretofore. A careful reading of THE ERA ought to have convinced *The Watchman* that it is equally anxious to expose all frauds and correct all abuses, no matter by whom committed, and so it will continue to be while we have control of it. That Littlefield was a prince of thieves and swindlers is true, but, judging from the majority report, drawn up by gentlemen who had carefully looked into the accounts and charges of the Public Printer for several years past, we incline to think that he did not defraud the Treasury as Public Printer. He did not draw the large sum *The Watchman* believes he did for printing. If he did, the fraud will be fully exposed by the report of the Committee, appointed at the last Session of the Legislature, to investigate the alleged frauds upon the Treasury of the State. That Committee consisted of Attorney General Shipp, Gen. James G. Martin and Joseph B. Batchelor, Esq., all Conservatives or Democrats. Their report, we learn, is in the hands of the printer and will soon be given to the public. We learn that while a number of Republicans will be implicated by it, some prominent Democrats and Conservatives will be implicated also.

We shall urge that every thing be done that can be done, not only to expose the frauds but to recover to the State the vast sums that have been stolen from her. We copy, with our endorsement, an able article from *The Asheville Pioneer* on this subject in this issue.

That "classical" paper, THE P-I-T-E-S, says we may know something about P-u-r-s-e-y-i-s-m, but that we are not likely to know anything about plain Presbyterians. We should like to know where the editor of that paper obtained his Classical and Theological Dictionaries.

The PITIEHS knew very well that it was not us, but correspondent, that said he knew Mr. Phillips was a member of the Presbyterian Church. It has deceived its readers; will it undeceive them? We shall see.

The Reports on the Public Printing.

In our last we published in full both the majority and minority reports of the Joint Committee to investigate the matter of the Public Printing. The minority report is very full and able, setting forth the case fairly, as exhibited by the testimony and fair and impartial calculations. It has created a profound impression upon all who have read it. In fact no intelligent man can read it, and compare it with the testimony, published elsewhere in this issue, and fail to conclude that a most outrageous fraud and swindle has been perpetrated upon the Treasury of the State. Read the testimony carefully, and say if this is not so.

But it is the majority report that we have taken up our pen to criticize. And we hazard but little in saying that it is one of the most extraordinary reports ever submitted to a deliberative body. In answer to the first inquiry presented by the Joint resolution—"What was the contract of the Public Printer?"—the majority append the written contract, as agreed upon and signed by the contracting parties. The contracting parties were the Legislative Committee on printing and Mr. James H. Moore, who thereby became Public Printer. In that contract it is specified that the Public Printer shall receive:

"For all plain work, seventy-five cents per thousand *ems*."

"For all rule and figure work, one dollar and fifty cents per thousand *ems*."

Here, then, is the contract, as found and presented by the report, in relation to the price to be paid for the type-setting, the only thing about which there is any dispute. The next question that presents itself to the mind of the reader is, what is meant by the word "*ems*," used in the contract? The majority report leaves no doubt upon that question; it has met and decided it fairly and squarely by recommending the passage of a resolution, directing the Auditor to audit the printer's accounts, *provided* the matter is counted by the *em quad*. This is what the Legislative Committee on printing understood the contract to be when they signed it—they did not understand it to mean the letter *m*. Yet it is everywhere admitted that the matter has not been measured by the *em quad*, but by the letter *m*.

After this, with what astonishment will the following sentence of the majority report be read:

"Your Committee, in order to answer the other inquiries of the resolution, proceeded to summon and examine a large number of witnesses, and after a thorough examination and mature consideration of the evidence, are of opinion that the contract, as explained by Mr. Moore to the Committee, at the time the same was under consideration, has not been violated, and that no funds have been improperly overdrawn from the Treasury by the Public Printer, or any one connected therewith."

It is a matter of deep regret, that the name of a gentleman who has borne so good a character as Dr. Worth, should be appended to the report.

legislative committee did not believe that the mode of computation had been changed, but only that a reduction of the prices was made—that the committee was satisfied that the mode of measurement proposed, was the *cheapest* and *most favorable* to the State. And yet the testimony proves conclusively, that while the contract—a copy of which is annexed to the report—was believed by the committee, making and signing it, to have reduced the price from 87½ cents—the price first agreed on—to 75 cents per thousand *ems*, it has been so construed by the Public Printer as *actually to increase* it to about \$1.05 per thousand *ems*. And, in consequence of this construction, from three to six thousand dollars more have been drawn from the treasury for the work done than the work was worth, according to the contract, as agreed on, signed and understood by the Committee executing the same. And yet no taint of dishonesty is declared by the majority of the Democratic party, by failing to levy the tax, virtually acknowledges that it attempted to *drive* the people into the support of its unconstitutional and partisan Convention scheme. For after what has happened it will be unable to convince the people that it acted honestly in the position which it took, and the threats which it made in the Convention campaign. What is to be done with such a party? In August next the people will pronounce a verdict upon it from which it will never recover.

Especial pains seem to have been taken by the majority to vindicate Mr. Turner from all blame in the matter. It is declared that he had nothing to do with the terms of the contract, and knows nothing about it. But of one thing there is no doubt, the money over-drawn went into the pockets of Mr. Turner. And when the matter of the swindling measurement was first exposed in September last he did not cease presenting his bills, and declare he would receive no more money till his accounts were adjusted? He did not condemn and repudiate what had been done, but defended it, rather. He continued to present his bills, as the Auditor very properly refused to audit, thus, perhaps, saving the State from considerable loss. Thus Mr. Turner assumed whatever responsibility could attach to any one on account of it, and made himself a *particeps criminis*, to say the least of it. The great watch-dog of the Treasury has been detected in receiving money's *improperly OVER-DRAWS* from the Treasury, even according to the majority report. The majority of the Committee having whitewashed the Public Printer, *The Sentinel* will now whitewash them.

It is a matter of deep regret, that the name of a gentleman who has borne so good a character as Dr. Worth, should be appended to the report.

Rather Funny.

The discussion which has been elicited in the Senate during the last two weeks upon the State debt, has brought out the fact, that the Democratic party is unworthy to be trusted with the control of the State. It is well known to almost every voter in the State, that the Democratic party took the position during the Convention campaign, that unless a Convention was called, and the Constitution amended, the Legislature which is now in session, would be compelled to levy a tax of \$2,500,000 to pay interest on the public debt. This was the issue as far as the Democrats were able to make it. Convention was defeated. The Legislature re-assembled on the third Monday of last month. Much of the session has been spent in considering the State debt. Having appealed to the people to be relieved of the Constitutional requirement to levy a tax to pay interest on the State debt, the people refusing to grant said appeal, it was to have been expected that our Democratic friends would have been consistent, and when the bill relative to State debt came up for discussion, that they would have promptly inserted a provision in that bill calculated to raise \$2,500,000, to pay interest on the State debt. Such is not the case. The Democrats are opposed to levying any tax, however little, to pay interest on the State debt. They told the people they would be compelled to levy the tax unless a Convention was called. They have not kept their word. They told the people that they would do a certain thing; they have done another. The bill reported by Mr. John W. Graham, proposing to compromise the debt by exchanging the stocks of the State with bonds for which the stocks had been exhausted, to issue new bonds in exchange for bonds which may be outstanding, except those issued since 1867, and to levy a tax calculated to raise four hundred thousand dollars to pay interest on the debt when compromised and reduced, received only seven Democratic votes in the Senate on Friday last. Several Senators took occasion during the discussion to say, that they would not vote to tax the people to pay one dollar of interest on the State debt. All these gentlemen signed the Legislative Address which gave the people the right to understand that if Convention was not carried—if the people did not vote for it—that they, these same gentlemen—Senators and Representatives—would be compelled to levy a tax to pay interest on the State debt; and that the amount of that tax would be \$2,500,000. The people refused to be driven into sanctioning a revolutionary and unconstitutional measure. The people assumed the responsibility of defeating Convention; but the Democratic members of the Legislature fail to make their word good to the people. They fail to vote for any tax. What becomes of their consciences which were so tender before and during the Convention campaign? Has perjury been committed? It appears that the consciences of these gentlemen have undergone a very great change since last August, or their minds have been very

much enlightened since the Convention election. At that time they were exceedingly tender, but now, they openly and boldly commit the very act which they proclaimed from the stump, during the Convention campaign, would constitute perjury! There seems to be a screw loose somewhere.—

There is something rotten in the Democratic party as well as in Denmark.—Many people expected the Democratic party to make good its assertion, that the tax must be levied and collected, unless the Convention was carried. The Democrats in the Legislature go back upon their record. The party by failing to levy the tax to pay the interest on the debt acknowledge, either that they attempted to deceive the people last summer, or that they have been convinced of their error by the Republicans. In either event it is a grand triumph for the Republicans. The Democratic party, by failing to levy the tax, virtually acknowledges that it attempted to *drive* the people into the support of its unconstitutional and partisan Convention scheme. For after what has happened it will be unable to convince the people that it acted honestly in the position which it took, and the threats which it made in the Convention campaign. What is to be done with such a party? In August next the people will pronounce a verdict upon it from which it will never recover.

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