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SPEECH OF COL. I. J. YOUNG

DELIVERED AT LOUISBURG, N. C.

ON THE 12th day of March, 1872.

Fellow Citizens of the County of Franklin: I am here in response to an invitation from some of your leading Republicans to address you on the political issues of the day.

The Greeks, in their earlier and better days, met every fourth year to engage in their Olympic games and to renew their patriotic devotion. So, my friends, the people of this great American continent are called upon quadrannually to select nearly all the officers of our governments, both State and National.

It is highly proper then that we should meet and discuss the political issues of the day. Whether the whole people are to be benefited and enlightened by these discussions and arguments depends in a great measure upon the manner in which they are presented.

I will attempt to be brief, and with your patient attention, will endeavor to show that much of the evil that has befallen us, is the result of a failure of our people to listen to reason; and a too ready conclusion of our minds to embrace what passion and prejudice, inflamed by designing demagogues, suggest, as a cure for those ills that daily afflict us.

REPUBLICAN PARTY.

There are to-day two political parties in this American Republic. We may find to approve or disapprove in either, we are bound to act. If we act at all, with one or the other of them. The Republican party, to which I belong, had its birth just prior to the beginning of the late rebellion, in the year 1858.

It is the fixed purpose and decision of the American people to maintain by every means that may be necessary the free exercise of all political rights to every citizen of the United States. It stands without a rival. No party in any nation or nation of the world has accomplished so much in so short a period.

But what do we find here in the South? Dissatisfied and disappointed political leaders have perfected a secret political organization in nearly all the Southern States; extending it into every county, and for the purpose of practically nullifying the policy of the government, by intimidation and violence upon the colored people, and those of the whites who encourage them in the free exercise of the rights that have been conferred on their race.

It has established friendly relations with all the great powers of the world, and by patient firmness, given to polygamy in the Mormon settlement such a check as to secure its peaceable and speedy eradication.

I might elaborate and speak of many other great triumphs of this great party, within the last twelve years, in most of which it has encountered the most obstinate opposition from the Democratic party of this country.

Can any one point to a party that has accomplished so much in so short a time, or even at all? I admit that many may have committed blunders. In the accomplishment of these mighty works. But, my friends, all the parties that preceded it in this country committed serious blunders.

None of these great parties had one half the difficulties to encounter that have beset the Republican party. Yet its errors have been less in magnitude than most of the Democratic party—its rival of the present day—of which I shall speak directly. The Republican party is charged with centralizing too much power in the General Government, and with stripping the States of their sovereignty.

Is our government but a rope of sand? Has it no power to preserve itself, but must lie prostrate and divided at the caprice of any of her erring

children? Away with such a theory of government. No, my friends, not so with our government. As brilliant, glorious and beneficent as many of her deeds have been, they are but the consequences of the great good that has saved the Union, that we might be a Nation of freemen with equal civil and political rights.

If, in the assertion of the National sovereignty, that of States has not sometimes been encroached upon, the fault has not been with the Republican party, but with the almost unsurmountable difficulties of the situation. Its principles properly construed and understood, do not lead to a great consolidated empire, which ignores the rights of States, but teaches that both are sustained within their proper spheres.

We are also charged with disregard of Constitutional provisions in the passage of the Reconstruction Act. Our only made the slaves free, but placed the colored people of the whole country on a civil and political equality with the whites, guaranteeing equal protection by express provision in the National Constitution. This Government of abstract justice and right. But it was hastened by well grounded apprehensions that the white people of the South would not willingly allow these emancipated slaves the practical exercise of the enjoyments of the rights of free citizens.

It was human nature just after the war for the white people of the South to feel alienated from the government which they had struggled so manfully to destroy. And my friends, it was but natural for the government to be sensitive to any manifestation of continued hostilities, and painfully anxious to avoid a repetition of the dangerous ordeal through which it had just passed.

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